Voice into Text

Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece

Edited by
I. Worthington

BRILL

VOICE INTO TEXT

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SUPPLEMENTUM CENTESIMUM QUINQUAGESIMUM SEPTIMUM

IAN WORTHINGTON (ED.)

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ORALITY AND LITERACY IN ANCIENT GREECE

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E.J. BRILL
LEIDEN · NEW YORK · KÖLN
1996

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Voice into text: orality and literacy in ancient Greece / edited by
Ian Worthington.
p. cm. — (Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava.
Supplementum, ISSN 0169-8958 ; 157)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 9004104313 (cloth: alk. paper)
1. Greek literature—Criticism, Textual. 2. Written
communication—Greece—History. 3. Oral communication—Greece—History. 4. Oral tradition—Greece—History. 5. Language and
culture—Greece. 6. Literacy—Greece—History. 7. Writing—Greece—History. 8. Transmission of texts. 9. Greece—Civilization.
I. Worthington, Ian. II. Series.
PA3521.V65 1995
880.8'001—dc20 95-41628
CIP

ISSN 0169-8958
ISBN 90 04 10431 3

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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PREFACE

There is no need to justify the appearance of this volume given the importance attached to the implications of orality and literacy for Greek society and indeed the Greek mind. Was ancient Greece essentially an oral culture? What impact did literacy have on what was an oral society? Can an oral and literate culture exist side-by-side, and how does one affect the other? What was the extent of literacy in classical Greece?

In recent years a number of books has appeared addressing these and other questions, and opening new and exciting avenues for the study of the ancient world and its peoples. At the same time, the importance of comparative evidence and approaches is emphasised, of the need to go 'beyond' the classical world and its chronological limits and consider other societies, ancient and modern (for example, Australian Aboriginal, Greek, South African). The chapters in this book draw together a number of genres from the viewpoint of orality and literacy, and draw up another picture of ancient Greek society and its people by means of classical and anthropological approaches.

The chapters in this volume were originally delivered as papers at a conference entitled *Voice Into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*, held at the University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia, from 3rd-8th July 1994. All papers in this volume have been externally and peer refereed.

The origins of the conference lay in a conversation I had with Jack Ellis and Peter Bicknell at Monash University in early 1993. We had been talking about orality, literacy and ring composition, and gradually the idea of convening a conference on those areas materialised. Since I was about to move to the University of Tasmania that year I was particularly keen to convene the conference there, and I am grateful to my department and university for allowing a newcomer the chance to do this, and for recognising the importance of all areas of Greek studies. What I envisaged as a two- or three-day gathering with plenty of time for discussion quickly blossomed into a full-scale event, with scholars from America, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia attending and giving papers on areas such as art, comedy, historiography, law, oratory, religion,

rhetoric, tragedy, and on orality in contemporary cultures which also have a bearing on the ancient world (see list of conference papers on p. ix-x). My emphasis still remained on full discussion time, and over the course of the week everyone profited from very fruitful academic and social intercourses, exchanged in a wonderfully friendly atmosphere. At the conclusion of the conference it was decided to hold another, and Professor Anne Mackay will be convening *Epos and Logos: Ancient Literature and Its Oral Context* at the University of Natal, Durban, South Aftrica, in July 1996.

I am grateful to all the scholars who attended the conference and also to those who agreed to submit their papers for publication and who then met various deadlines imposed on them.

I am especially grateful, as always, to Tracy Furlonger, for all of the time she 'voluntarily' donated to help me to run the conference, even when hard-pressed to meet her own deadlines, and for her support and guidance throughout.

One or two points should be noted in this book: I have allowed authors the indulgence of spelling ancient Greek names as they prefer. Thus, there is no consistency in the spelling of such names. All Greek has been translated. Finally, all dates are B.C.

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Elizabeth BAYNHAM (Newcastle) *The* Alexander Romances *Within Alexander Historiography*
Sheila COLWELL (Washington) *The Relationship Between Text and Audience in Ancient Greek and Hebrew Choral Lyric*
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Christopher W. MARSHALL (U.B.C.) *Literary Awareness in Euripides and His Audience*
Bob MILNS (Queensland) *The Authenticity of Demosthenes, Speeches 7, 10, 13 and 17*
Elizabeth MINCHIN (A.N.U.) *The Performance of Lists and Catalogues in the Homeric Epics*
Neil MORPETH (Newcastle) *Thucydides and the 'Immediacy' of the Amprakiot's Herald: War as Social Pathology*
Stephen NIMIS (Ohio) *Oral/Written or Verse/Prose?*
Neil O'SULLIVAN (W.A.): *Written and Spoken in the First Sophistic*
David PHILLIPS (Macquarie) *Prepared Ostraka, Scribes and Athenian Literacy*
Barry POWELL (Wisconsin) *Rhapsodic Delivery of Memorised Oral Texts and the Earliest Representations of Myth in Greek Art*
Louise PRATT (Emory) *The Seal of Theognis: Writing and Oral Poetry*
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Ruth SCODEL (Michigan) *Self-Correction, Spontaneity and Orality in Archaic Poetry*
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Harold TARRANT (Newcastle) *'Before and After Washes': Narrative Technique in the Narrated Dialogues of Plato, and the Oral Transmission Motif*

Carol THOMAS (Washington) *Wingy Mysteries in Divinity*

Janet WATSON (Wellington) *The Expected and The Unexpected in Homer's Divine Interventions*

Richard WHITAKER (Cape Town) *Orality and Literacy in the Poetic Traditions of Archaic Greece and Southern Africa*

Lyn WILSON (Monash) *The Voice and Circles of a Woman: Sappho of Lesbos*

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POETRY

CHAPTER ONE

THE PERFORMANCE OF LISTS AND CATALOGUES IN THE HOMERIC EPICS

ELIZABETH MINCHIN

Over recent years the various lists and catalogues which are to be found in the Homeric epics have been subject to careful scrutiny. But although they have been studied individually in terms of both form and content, there has been no sustained discussion of the activity itself: listing and cataloguing in traditional oral epic.[1] Although scholars recognise that Homer's lists and catalogues, like his narrative, are the products of an oral tradition (indeed, lists may be considered to be a defining feature of the oral genre), they have not yet considered them in the context of oral performance.[2] There has been no attempt to explain why a poet included lists and catalogues in his composition and how they might appeal to a listening audience.

This chapter attempts to evaluate Homer's lists and catalogues as a genre of their own which plays a special role in oral art. I shall consider them, in all their variety, not in the guise in which we meet them today in Homer–in print, on the page–but as units of discourse

[1] Much scholarly attention has been devoted to the catalogues of *Iliad* 2, and to the historical and geographical information which they store. On the content of the Catalogue of Ships see G. Jachmann, *Die homerische Schiffskatalog und die Ilias* (Köln, 1958); D.L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley, 1959), chap. 4; R. Hope Simpson and J.F. Lazenby, *The Catalogue of Ships in Homer's Iliad* (Oxford, 1970); and G. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, 1 (Cambridge, 1985), 166-240. On the structural patterns which underpin individual entries see C.R. Beye, 'Homeric Battle Narrative and Catalogues', *HSCPh* 68 (1964), 345-73; B. Powell, 'Word Patterns in the Catalogue of Ships (B494-709): A Structural Analysis of Homeric Language', *Hermes* 106 (1978), 255-64; and M. Edwards, 'The Structure of Homeric Catalogues', *TAPhA* 110 (1980), 81-105. For examination of form and content together see K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer* (Princeton, 1993), 13-26. Homer's other lists have not excited quite the same interest, and discussion is again limited to form and content: Beye, 'Homeric Battle Narrative and Catalogues'; Edwards, 'Structure of Homeric Catalogues'; W.W. Minton, 'Invocation and Catalogue in Hesiod and Homer', *TAPhA* 93 (1962), 188-212; and J. Butterworth, 'Homer and Hesiod', in *Studies in Honour of T.B.L. Webster*, edd. J.H. Betts *et al.*, 1 (Bristol, 1986), 33-45.

[2] On the Catalogue of Ships and the oral tradition see Page, *History*, chap. 4 and Kirk, *Commentary*, 1. 168-77.

developed with performance in mind and presented before a live audience. My discussion will have a dual focus: on the singer and his catalogue-songs, and on the audience and its response. My point of reference will be our own twentieth-century experience of list-songs as singers and as listeners. For a contemporary perspective on list-singing I have drawn on the experiences of an Australian folksinger, Karen Ottley, who has given me first-hand information on a singer's preparation for list-singing and on audience response to list-songs.

A discussion of this kind demands a definition of terms. For my purposes, the term 'list' will describe those passages in Homer where the poet presents a sequence of four or more place names, personal names, or items, all modified by little or no descriptive material. The minimum figure of four is, indeed, arbitrary. But, in that the sequential presentation of fewer than four items poses little challenge to memory or to performative skills, I shall not identify smaller collections as lists. Examples of lists are the strings of Greek heroes of *Iliad* 7. 162-8; 8. 261-7; 11. 301-3; 23. 836-8; the strings of Trojans at *Iliad* 5. 677-8 and 705-10; 11. 56-60; 13. 789-94; 16. 694-6; 17. 215-18; 21. 209-10; 24. 248-51; the rivers of *Iliad* 12. 19-23; the Nereids of *Iliad* 18. 39-49; the citadels of *Iliad* 9. 149-52; the plunder at *Iliad* 11. 677-81; the Phaiakian volunteers of *Odyssey* 8. 111-19; and the suitors of *Odyssey* 22. 241-3. Note also a few lists which are, as it were, double-sided in that both subject and object of the key verb are changed with each entry. These double-sided lists in Homer reflect the nature of combat (see *Iliad* 15. 328-42; *Odyssey* 22. 265-8, 283-91).

A catalogue, on the other hand, is equally a list, but one in which some items are supplemented with enlivening description or comment, often rendered through narrative. We may think of a catalogue as an expanded list. I identify the following as catalogues: *Iliad* 2. 494-759, 816-77; 14. 315-28; 23. 288-351; and *Odyssey* 11. 235-327. For a catalogue of items rather than personal names, note Agamemnon's gift offers to Achilleus: *Iliad* 9. 121-56 (cf. 264-98); and 19. 243-8. Catalogues may well contain fewer entries than lists; they gain their substance, however, from the elaboration of the individual item. Some lists develop into catalogues: the singer begins his presentation in list-form but, as the song proceeds, he chooses to elaborate on individual entries (*Iliad* 13. 685-700; 14. 511-22; 15. 328-42). For the reverse movement, where a catalogue is reduced to a list see *Iliad* 16. 399-418.

On the face of it, a list is nothing more than a dry enumeration of names, or places, or objects, which interrupts the narrative line.

More precisely, it erupts from it, given that each entry in the list is, strictly speaking, part of the narrative. This relationship is made explicit in the grammar of the passage. Note the case relationships of *Iliad* 14. 315-28 (where the genitive case of 317, 319, 321, 323, 326, and 327 ties each item to the declaration of 315-16); and of *Iliad* 11. 56-60 (where the accusative case which gives coherence to the list). As a list grows longer, however, its link with its context seems to grow more tenuous. The extended list–for example, the list of the Nereids (*Iliad* 18. 39-49)–may come to exist for itself alone.

On the printed page lists and catalogues hold little attraction for most readers: a quick survey, for example, of first-time readers of the *Iliad* will reveal their impatience with Homer's great catalogues or with his pure lists. Although some readers may admire a list in written form for its antiquarian interest, for its completeness, for its wit, or its beauty, the majority, who read stories for the pleasure of narrative, will find a list tedious.[3] But to hear a list-song is, it seems, a very different experience. A listening audience will respond to this kind of itemisation with silent attention; and when the list is completed, the performance will often be acknowledged with applause, often louder or more enthusiastic than at any point during the narrative.[4] Radlov's descriptions of the enthusiastic reaction of a Kirghiz audience to catalogue-singing are confirmed by singers today. A list-song–even in our literate society–holds an audience's attention in a special way. If the singer reaches the end of his list without breakdown (a flawless performance is essential to success), it will be received with generous applause. This observation raises the question which is at the heart of my enquiry: why is it that a list performed should be received with so much enthusiasm?

With this question in mind, I propose to contrast list and narrative as modes of discourse and as performance pieces–although at first glance it might appear that there is little difference between the genres. When a poet in an oral tradition performs (whether he tells a story or sings a list-song), he faces challenges at two levels. Not only must he call up his material from memory at the moment he requires it; but he must also be able to deliver it effectively. The

[3] I pass over the history of list-making in written literature, except to note that most twentieth-century creative writers (with the conspicuous exception of James Joyce) are reluctant to use the list-mode. On the creative use of lists in contemporary fiction see D. Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (London, 1992), 61-5.

[4] See, for example, the comments of W. Radlov as quoted by H.M. and N.K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, 3 (Cambridge, 1940), 185.

success of his song will thus depend on memory and performance skills. I shall argue, however, that it is in these very respects that lists also *differ* from narrative–in the diverse demands which they make on memory and in their style of delivery. I shall begin, therefore, with a discussion of the part which memory plays in composition–of narrative and of lists. Then I shall make some observations on performance; this, too, is critical.

To be able to perform a singer must hold in memory the gist of the tale he wishes to tell: that is, the sequence of states and actions and of causes and effects which characterise this particular story.[5] The ability to do this is not exceptional in itself: to remember event-sequences is a natural activity.[6] Given that the principal system for the organisation of human memory is thought to be episodic, the sequential nature of narrative as we know it reflects and is reflected in the way in which we organise our memory store.[7] Because narrative is connected discourse–a song-path (cf. *Odyssey* 8. 481)–its sequence of cause and effect lends itself to memorisation and recall. And when it comes to fleshing out an event-sequence with details of routine activity, this is likewise a relatively simple matter. We all can reproduce in narrative what Homeric scholarship has called 'themes'. I have demonstrated elsewhere that Parry and Lord's themes are part of everybody's repertoire: we all store in memory (as cognitive 'scripts') information about activities such as dressing, or preparing a meal.[8] At these levels, therefore, the poet's ability to generate narrative can be matched by any member of his audience. With little more effort than the effort of attending to a story a conscientious listener may learn–and therefore be able to reproduce–its broad outlines; and in retelling it he might, like the oral poet himself, give full expression to the detail which is part of a script. We should bear in mind, too, that there is another factor which works in the favour of a storyteller, whether bard or amateur. A storyteller generally feels no compulsion to reproduce word-for-word a story which he has heard from another source. It is not always necessary,

[5] See J. Mandler and N. Johnson, 'Remembrance of Things Parsed: Story Structure and Recall', *Cognitive Psychology* 9 (1977), 111-51, at 113.

[6] For experimental observations of the recall of stories see F. Bartlett, *Remembering* (Cambridge, 1932), chap. 5.

[7] On this see R. Schank and R. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures* (Hillsdale, 1977), 17-19.

[8] 'Scripts and Themes: Cognitive Research and the Homeric Epic', *Class. Antiq.* 11 (1992), 229-41, at 234-7.

for example, that he adhere to the same order of presentation and the same style of storytelling, or make the same lexical choices or use the same syntactical structures.[9] He may collapse or expand event sequences, omit details, or incorporate a new episode. He may make any or all of these changes, intentionally or unintentionally, but as long as he leaves undisturbed the song-path which is at the heart of the narrative, his listeners will recognise it as the same story.

The activity of list-making and list-singing requires, by contrast, a different orientation of cognitive skills and a more concentrated application of memory than does narration. There is more emphasis in a list-song on memorisation and near word-for-word reproduction and less scope (than in other oral genres) for innovation.[10]

A list is not a connected sequence of events in the way that narrative is. It is simply a series of 'replayings' of a single event or action. What is being repeated is either one of the events from within an event-sequence (or type-scene) or the type-scene itself, perhaps in compressed form.[11] For examples of repetition of this kind see *Iliad* 11. 56-60 (the list of Trojan leaders around whom the Trojans gathered), and *Iliad* 14. 315-28 (the series of women whom Zeus has seduced). Because of the very density of the information which a list conveys, a list sung cannot be a spontaneous creation, composed at the moment of performance. It must be prepared in advance.[12] Anyone who has tried, without preparation, to put together a list, even of seven or eight items, can testify to this. A list may be a collection of traditional material. In this case the poet's version will be measured against a fixed standard–this is material which the audience itself will probably have heard before and perhaps knows.

[9] See A.B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New York, 1976), 95 and W.T. Wallace and D.C. Rubin, '"The Wreck of the Old 97": A Real Event Remembered in Song', in *Remembering Reconsidered*, edd. U. Neisser and E. Winograd (Cambridge, 1988), 283-310, who conclude (at p. 303): '[t]he memory for the ballad is not the exact song . . . rather, it is a collection of rules and constraints'; cf. R. Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge, 1977), 133.

[10] Cf. Finnegan, *Oral Poetry*, 73 and 84. This is not to say that singers may not exercise a creative spirit when composing lists, nor do I imply that they do not rehearse narrative, for they do: Lord, *Singer of Tales*, 21-9.

[11] Cf. Edwards, 'Homeric Catalogues', 101.

[12] For evidence of advance preparation in Homer note his use of numbers in his lists: *Iliad* 8. 266 (*einatos*), 9. 149 (*hepta*), and 24. 252 (*ennea*). Second, observe that he often does not take advantage of formulaic epithets which would promote fluent composition, but constructs his list from nouns alone (for example, at *Iliad* 5. 677-8; 11. 301-3; 16. 415-17; 17. 215-17; and 18. 39-48). Finally, on the two occasions when Homer has cause to offer a similar list, the lists are essentially the same and preserve the same order (*Iliad* 7. 162-8 and 8. 261-7).

The Catalogue of Ships is such a list. Unlike narrative, where a certain flexibility in presentation is always possible, a traditional list does not permit alteration. No name can be omitted and no wrong attributions can be made. This kind of list will have been committed to memory with care.

But not all lists are traditional. Some lists are fictitious; some are the original composition of the poet. In these cases there is a certain scope for internal variation: a list of this kind may be abbreviated; and names which are metrically equivalent may be substituted or interchanged. For invented lists see *Iliad* 5. 677-8 (the Lykians killed by Odysseus); 11. 301-3 (the men slain by Hektor); 16. 415-18 (the heroes killed by Patroklos); the Nereids of 18. 35-51; and the Phaiakian nobles of *Odyssey* 8. 111-19. So, in terms of tradition and invention alone, there are lists and there are lists. But, whatever the case, the performance of any list requires preparation and imposes its own demands, in some cases quite exacting, on memory.

Narrative, as I noted above, is connected discourse, which lends itself, simply and naturally, to learning and recall. Lists are clusters of elements which are not linked in this sequential way. How, then, does the learning of a list differ from the processing and recall of narrative? How does an oral poet overcome the very real limitations of memory for non-sequential data?[13] What are the factors which assist him in learning and retrieval? How, in short, does he cope with a task which most of his listeners do not willingly attempt? I believe that the following discussion will throw some light on the poetic craft of list-making both as it occurred within the Homeric epics and as it continues to be practised today in oral contexts.

The learning of a list of any kind requires some effort, for all except those few people who have a peculiar talent for this kind of memorisation. It has been proposed over the years (and is popularly accepted) that illiterate people have better memories than people in literate cultures because they cannot rely on written systems for the storage of data. Certainly, in the ancient world, in societies which were by no means universally literate, more was expected of memory: for example, in the assembly and in the law-courts of classical Athens, and in connection with dramatic performance.[14] But

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[13] The standard text on the limitations of memory is G. Miller, 'The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on our Capacity for Processing Information', *Psychological Review* 63 (1956), 81-97.

[14] For further discussion see R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), chap. 1.

were the people of the time better at memorising because they were illiterate? The very fact that people in the ancient world speak with admiration of various feats of memory suggests that the task of remembering and reproducing large quantities of data was considered difficult–as does the existence of texts which discuss training in artificial memory (through complex mnemonic systems).[15] Furthermore, twentieth-century cross-cultural studies find no *direct* relationship between illiteracy and memory; rather, they indicate that certain abilities can be fostered by particular cultural institutions.[16] So, with regard to the memorisation of lists and catalogues, I suggest that it was the oral tradition which provided a context in which practitioners from the time of their apprenticeship could develop certain skills of memory; it provided the stimulus to memorise both complex narrative and list-songs.

The critical factor for memorisation is organisation. If a list comprises items which are completely unconnected–and do not lend themselves therefore to categorisation or organisation–it cannot be readily memorised and requires learning by rote; this demands the time and patience of any list-learner, literate or pre-literate.[17] On the other hand, if material can be classified or organised in a way which is appropriate to the individual, it will be more easily recalled–all other things being equal.[18] Most of the lists which we construct for ourselves in everyday life are connected by some thread of association. Because all entries in such lists are related, we will not be obliged to expend such great effort to recall each one when the moment comes to do so. Because our range of choice has been significantly narrowed (in that all items have something in common),

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[15] For feats of memory see Pliny, *NH* 7. 88; Seneca, *Controuersiae* 1, praefatio 19; Cicero, *Brutus* 88, 301, on Hortensius' memory. As an indication of the ancients' deep interest in memory-training through association see, for example, *Ad Herennium*; Cicero, *De oratore* 2. lxxxvii. 355; and Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 11. ii. 17-22. For discussion see F.A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, 1966), chaps. 1 and 2.

[16] Does one have a better memory if one is illiterate? U. Neisser, 'Literacy and Memory', in *Memory Observed: Remembering in Natural Contexts*, ed. U. Neisser (San Francisco, 1982), 241-2, claims not; that, rather, there is a positive relation between schooling and memory.

[17] On categorisation see G. Mandler, 'Organization and Memory', in *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, edd. K.W. and J.T. Spence, 1 (New York, 1967), 335. Telephone numbers and those personal codes which we must memorise for survival are generally learned by rote. On mnemonic strategies see A. Baddeley, *Human Memory: Theory and Practice* (Hove and Hillsdale, 1990), chap. 8.

[18] See Mandler, 'Organization', 327-72.

our learning task has been less taxing than rote memorisation. All of the lists which Homer sings are of this kind: they are 'meaningful' lists.[19] Amongst the easiest to compose, learn and reproduce would be the strings of named heroes who play a significant role in the narrative. The list of Achaian heroes who respond to Nestor's challenge at *Iliad* 7. 161-19 is simply a list of those heroes who play a conspicuous role in the continuing narrative (Agamemnon, Diomedes, the Aiantes, Idomeneus, Meriones, Eurypylos, Thoas, and Odysseus); the list of Trojans who lead their men into battle (*Iliad* 12. 88-104) is a register of the principal Trojan actors in the epic; the suitors of *Odyssey* 22. 241-3 appear elsewhere in the story. For a singer who knows his story, it is possible to assemble such lists simply by reconsidering the gist of the narrative, calling to mind the leading actors across the tale, and allowing the hexameter rhythm of traditional epic to keep them in order. These lists, in comparison with others, require less preparation and rehearsal.

Lists of invented names are more of a test of the singer's skills. These names cannot be retrieved from the narrative proper; they must be called up from another source in memory and then combined in song. Take as an illustration the invented lists of Achaian or Trojan heroes about to die in battle at the hands of one or another of the great fighters. In these lists some names appear several times, sometimes applied to a Trojan hero, sometimes to an Achaian: names such as Chromios, Alastor, Noëmon, and Erymas are all used more than once in the narrative to identify either Trojan or Achaian heroes. It seems that Homer collected in memory a store of names which could be readily called to mind for general storytelling purposes. It is likely that he used a number of associative cues and semantic stratagems for organising names in his repertoire and therefore recalling them in groups. Some of these names are connected by associations of kinship or community. For example, it is significant that the names Tros and Dardanos occur within a few lines of each other, having been introduced quite casually into the lists of the slain (Dardanos, son of Bias, *Iliad* 20. 460; Tros, son of Alastor, *Iliad* 20. 463). Others, like Alastor (Avenger) and Erymas (Bulwark) would be stock names so appropriate to the battlefield that the context alone would generate them. And, indeed, in two of Homer's most delightful lists we find evidence of this same pragmatic mind at work. The Nereid-list of *Iliad* 18. 35-51 comprises a

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[19] For a definition of the term in psychology see Mandler, 'Organization', 329.

series of invented but meaningful names, most of which remind us of the divinity of the nymphs or of their relation to the sea. The learning of the list would certainly be facilitated by the rich semantic associations of names such as Glauke (Grey-green), Kymodoke (Wave-receiver), Speio (Grotto), Halia (Belonging to the sea), Pherousa (Bringer), and Aktaia (Coastland).[20] Note, too, that all the names in the list of the Phaiakian nobles (*Odyssey* 8. 111-19) are related to ships or to the sea. Here I use Fitzgerald's renderings: Akroneos (Tipmast), Okyalos (Tiderace), Nauteus (Hullman), Ponteus (Bluewater), Euryalos (Seareach). The charm of such a list for the listener–its wit and its whimsy–conceals the expedience of thematic association for the singer. Lists of this kind demonstrate both the great value of semantic and contextual association for list-construction and list-learning and the extent to which Homer exploited these cues. Nevertheless, the preparation of any invented list would require several hours of both creative and reiterative rehearsal.

To move to a more ambitious example of the genre, let us consider the Catalogue of Ships. This catalogue, an orderly description of the Achaian force, contingent by contingent, offers a combined geographical and demographical account of the Greek mainland and most of the islands nearby. Systematically it links regions and localities with specific heroes and their people. But this is no mere muster list. Through additional material–narrative (for example, about Tlepolemus: 2. 653-70) and passages of description (for example, of Nireus at 2. 671-5)–Homer individualises a number of heroes and makes them memorable. It is this supplementary information which breaks up and enriches the list (as it has been, for example, in the passage 2. 496-510); it gives it substance, and, in its celebration of the wider region, its heroes, and its resources, the catalogue becomes a splendid creation in its own right. The poet, indeed, leaves his listeners in no doubt as to how they are to respond to it. When, at 2. 484-93, he speaks of the contribution which the Muses will be making to his song, he is using his invocation to inform his audience that this will be no ordinary performance. To sing this catalogue-song would be beyond the resources of ordinary mortals: it would exhaust their powers of memory and even their voice. By

[20] On the list of the Nereids see Butterworth, 'Homer and Hesiod', 41. On the 'evocative power of names' in lists see R. Lamberton, *Hesiod* (New Haven and London, 1988), 83.

virtue of the Muses' support, the Catalogue of Ships, according to the poet, will be an extraordinary catalogue.

For all that this catalogue is long and detailed, we can deduce the singer's overall strategy for retrieving it from memory. It resembles all Homer's lists in that it is constructed from material which is connected thematically. But what is more important in this case is that the material is connected spatially also: the catalogue is organised and presented as a kind of circuit around Greece and the islands, broken only at 2. 645-80 to include Crete, Rhodes, and the islands close by.

This arrangement is not, I believe, the result of happy chance. I suggest that the content of the Catalogue had long been structured in this way so that it might be formatted in any bard's memory as a 'cognitive map', a kind of schema which preserves information about places and the relationships between places.[21] The sequential order of the 'map' directs search in memory. It assists in the recall of the principal regions and the peoples who dwelt there. It acts as a kind of check: it attempts to guard against the unintentional omission of items (as indeed may have happened in this case–the Cycladic group of islands is, by accident or design, omitted from the Catalogue). This, then, is the first level of organisation within the structure of the Catalogue. Within these broad categories further information has been nested;[22] that is, individual entries at each level hold further memories at a lower level.[23] Thus higher-order spatial cues prompt other associations. We all know from experience that to return to a place, or to think of a place, even a place which we have not visited, will trigger associations in memory. The major geographical or demographical headings of the Catalogue (such as the Phokians, the Lokrians, Euboia, Athens) therefore cue further lower-order place-names. These are often found in combination with traditional epithets, which sometimes provide strong visual, and therefore memorable, images of settlements, and in this way

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21 On the notion of the 'cognitive map' see U. Neisser, 'Domains of Memory', in *Memory: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, edd. P.R. Solomon *et al.* (New York and Berlin, 1988), 67-83, at 76-7. The value of a cognitive 'map' appears to have been recognised from early times: Yates, *Memory*, 21-6. The systematised presentation of the Catalogue indicates that the singer has some understanding of the geography of the region. See Kirk, *Commentary*, 1. 185-6, for the suggestion that the routes of the Catalogue are those which a traveller of the time might have taken.

22 On 'nesting' see U. Neisser, 'What is Ordinary Memory the Memory Of?', in Neisser and Winograd, *Remembering Reconsidered*, 356-73, at 369-70.

23 On the hierarchical structure of memory see Mandler, 'Organization', 366.

assist in fixing the names of individual locations: Eteonos with its many mountain spurs (497); spacious Mykalessos (498); Thisbe abounding in doves (502); grassy Haliartos (503); and Arne rich in grapes (507). Many of the place-names themselves appear to record some remarkable attribute of a site: another mnemonic cue. From the Catalogue of Ships we have Arne (cf. *arnon*, lamb), Araithyreia (cf. *araios*, narrow), Bessa (cf. *bessa*, wooded glen), Helike (cf. *helix*, winding), Kerinthos (cf. *keros*, beeswax), Orneai (cf. *ornis*, bird), Orthe (*orthos*, straight), and Pteleon (cf. *ptelea*, elm).[24] These place-names in turn prompt non-spatial material, such as the names of the individual heroes and their stories.[25] That is, the names of heroes will be closely associated with particular places: the names Nireus or Pheidippos or Podarkes or Gouneus will be triggered by spatial information. In that the Catalogue was structured in a way most favourable to learning, it would have been possible for a performing poet to learn it and to reproduce its *crucial* information accurately.[26] Furthermore, given that spatial memory is so powerful, so dependable and so enduring, it is certain that organisation of this kind in memory would have assisted in the preservation of the Catalogue as an entity.[27]

As has been argued, the connectedness of his material at associative and semantic levels would have been of considerable assistance to Homer as he sang his lists and catalogues. But there are other modes of organisation which would also have assisted him as list-learner. I think here of the surface features of epic song, such as rhythm, alliteration, assonance, and, of course, the formulaic nature of the epic dialect, all of which prompt the memory–and favour learning–even as they are in themselves pleasing to the listener's

[24] On these and other names see W.A. McDonald, 'Early Greek Attitudes toward Environment', *Names* 6 (1958), 208-16, at 213-15. On visual images as aids to learning see Baddeley, *Human Memory*, 106-9 and 188-90, and on ancient recognition of this phenomenon see Yates, *Memory*, chaps. 1 and 2. The distinctive epithets of oral epic would appear to have been of assistance to the singer, not a burden, as suggested by Minton, 'Invocation and Catalogue', 206.

[25] For discussion see Neisser, 'Domains', 75-81.

[26] M. Wood, *In Search of the Trojan War* (London, 1985), 133, records instances of twentieth-century engagement with the Catalogue of Ships.

[27] On this see Neisser, 'Domains', 77 and 'Ordinary Memory', 369. This observation from another field may well provide support (but not confirmation) for the suggestion that the Catalogue of Ships preserves accurate memories of a Mycenaean past. We must acknowledge that Homer adapted the Catalogue to his narrative: Kirk, *Commentary*, 1. 195, 198, 231, and 233. Spatial memory may have played a comparable role in the recall of the Catalogue of Heroines (*Odyssey* 11. 235-327).

ear.[28] In that such phonological patterns, whether they manifest themselves in the quantitative rhythm of epic song or in the small-scale repetitions of the Nereid-list, limit possible choices for word or phrase, they reduce the load on memory; they promote, therefore, the recall and production of the kind of enumerative song which is my concern here.[29] Observe, for example, the repeated sound patterns in the Nereid-list (Kymodoke, Kymothoë; Doto, Proto; Doto, Doris; Dynamene, and Dexamene), and in the list of the Phaiakians of *Odyssey* 8 (Elatreus, Eretmeus; Prymneus, Ponteus, Proreus; Akroneos, and Anabesineos).[30]

There is today a recognised discipline of list-learning which would accommodate itself readily to the metrical patterns of traditional epic, in which words were grouped in hexameter units. It would also be facilitated by the distribution of sound patterns, which cluster words within sense units. This technique, called 'incremental recall', requires the learner to break off a chunk of material and rehearse it until it is memorised; a second chunk is learned, then combined with the first, and this sequence is repeated until the whole list is assembled.[31] Once a list is learned–and actively maintained–it can be reproduced with ease.[32] The technique is used by Karen Ottley in her preparation of songs of all kinds. I believe that all traditional poets, including Homer, would thus have practised and learned their list-songs.

Because the content of these lists and catalogues and its surface expression provide various associative, semantic and phonological prompts for the poet as he sings, the task of memorisation is made somewhat easier than it may at first appear; at least, he will not have to resort to rote memorisation.[33] I do not wish, however, to dimin-

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[28] Rhyming or rhythmic couplets in English, for example, help us remember the number of days in each month, or dates of events in history: cf. Baddeley, *Human Memory*, 186-8. On the significance of poetic ties and rhythm: Wallace and Rubin, 'The Old 97', 294-7 and 301-3.

[29] On alliteration and assonance in the Nereid-list: Butterworth, 'Homer and Hesiod', 40.

[30] Cf. sound patterns in lists of heroes: *Iliad* 5. 677-8 (Alastor, Alkandros); 705-7 (Orestes, Oresibios, Oinomaos, Oinops); 8. 274 (Orsilochos, Ormenos, Ophelestes); 11. 301-2 (Opites, Dolops, Opheltios, Oros); 14. 511-15 (Mermeros, Meriones, Morus); and the river-list of 12. 19-23 (Rhesos, Karesos, Rhodios, Skamandros, Simoeis).

[31] On 'chunks' as integrated pieces of information and on incremental recall see Baddeley, *Human Memory*, 40-2 and 156-8.

[32] On 'maintenance rehearsal' see Baddeley, *Human Memory*, 161.

[33] For comparable feats of memory (specifically, memory for names) in another pre-literate culture, achieved by means other than rote memorisation see G. Bateson,

ish the effort involved. If a poet is to sing a list or catalogue successfully, he must spend time in preparation; and he must apply himself more intensively to this task than he would when he commits to memory the gist of a story. And there are other motives for rehearsal. Because the information conveyed in a list is so dense—because almost every word is critical—a list-performance makes as many demands on the singer's vocal skills as on his memory. Because a flawed performance of a list is a source of embarrassment to performer and audience, the singer will spend considerable time before performance in practising his song. What he will be practising is not the list itself but its performance—when memory and performative skills come together.

When a singer performs a narrative passage he will take pains with enunciation and expression, so that his words may be clearly heard and his meaning taken. But because he is reproducing the natural structures and patterns of sequential discourse, which contain a certain amount of predictable material, not all words will be given the same emphasis. When the singer begins to sing a list, every member of the audience is immediately aware that something has changed. Homer, as we noted above, sometimes prefaces his performance of a list-song with an address to his Muse, to seek her support in this new enterprise and to indicate to his audience that he is about to undertake a more demanding passage (for such invocations see *Iliad* 2. 484-93, 761-2; 11. 218-20; and 14. 508-10). But, in the absence of an invocation, the poet's uniform and clear diction, his evenly-distributed emphases, his concentration of energy mental and physical—in short, his firmly emphatic delivery—draw attention to his list-song, just as much as the relentless repetition of sentence structure and grammatical signal. When he prepares a list the singer works in the knowledge that all elements have equal weight and that every word is important. This explains why he appears to put more effort into his diction, which on these occasions becomes more studied and more precise. For the singer knows that a word lost cannot be recuperated. And yet gains in clarity and precision are counterbalanced by a loss of expressiveness, because the material is struc-

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'Totemic Knowledge in New Guinea', in *Memory Observed: Remembering in Natural Contexts*, ed. U. Neisser (San Francisco, 1982), 269-73. Bateson notes that names to be remembered are meaningful, and that paired names are connected by semantic association and/or sound patterns—features which I have identified as crucial to successful memorisation in the Homeric tradition.

turally so uniform. For the same reason it is possible too that the pace of delivery will be faster. This is a singer's instinctive response to the particular task of recall: the word-for-word reproduction of prepared material. Karen Ottley explains that she is 'on automatic' when she performs a list song; if she slows her pace of delivery to the point where she can think about what she is doing, she begins to make mistakes.[34] That is, at a slower pace, her performance would be in some way flawed or, at least, undistinguished.

At the level of performance the list introduces a change of style and a change of pace. For the audience, therefore, even a brief list of six or seven entries will serve a practical function–a diversion from the task of tracking the narrative. A longer list will do more, offering listeners the pleasure of listening for the sake of listening. The surface features of the text–phonological qualities of rhythm, alliteration, and assonance–catch their attention and delight their ears. So we observe that those features of list-singing which serve as mnemonic cues for the singer are also a source of pleasure to the listener. Like the associative or semantic cues which were discussed above, they act not only as constraints but also as opportunities.

As a list-song is performed, the audience's response is one of quiet attention and even, for sustained lists and catalogues, a subdued excitement. This excitement relates in part to the content of the list but also to its delivery. Both the singer and his listeners are anxious that the performance will be a success. Should the singer reach his list's end triumphantly–without faltering and without confusion–the audience's suspense is resolved. The longer the list, the greater will be the relief and delight of the audience once the end is reached. The singing of a longer list or catalogue, therefore, becomes a performance within a performance.

What does a singer hope to achieve when he includes a list or a catalogue in his performance of epic song? As I have shown above, in respect of content and delivery, lists and catalogues offer a different kind of experience to the listener. They are undoubtedly part of the entertainment. But a list or a catalogue can make its individual contribution to the story itself. Even as it holds back the onward flow of narrative, a list can arouse in the audience a sense of urgency and of accelerating action. Homer takes advantage of that excitement

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[34] On the interrelationship of rhythm, pace and efficiency of recall: Baddeley, *Human Memory*, 40-1; on the 'speed' of the Nereid-passage: Butterworth, 'Homer and Hesiod', 40.

which I described above and which relates to the performance of the list to arouse suspense in connection with the action of the narrative. He may use a list to express directly the gathering pace and intensity of events; he may use a list to herald a climax. A number of examples will demonstrate what I mean.

Many of Homer's lists convey the urgency of the battlefield in a way that detailed narrative cannot. When Homer wishes to suggest the eager response of heroes to the prospect of battle or of a contest, he often uses a list: *Iliad* 7. 162-8; 8. 261-7; 12. 88-104; 23. 288-351, 754-6, 836-8; and *Odyssey* 8. 111-19. When he wishes to suggest fierce activity across the battlefield, he will list a number of combatants, and sometimes their opponents as well. That this is a favoured method of conveying such impressions quickly and efficiently is evident from the number of lists in the battle narrative of the *Iliad* (for example, 5. 677-8; 16. 415-18; 21. 209-10), and from the appearance of the list, even the double-sided list, in the fighting of *Odyssey*, where otherwise lists have been used sparingly (22. 241-3, 265-8, 283-6–in this last passage, for example, Odysseus makes a cast at Eurydamas, Telemachos at Amphimedon, Eumaios at Polybos, and Philoitios at Ktesippos). Some lists summarise sequential action (*Iliad* 5. 677-8); others provide an overview of simultaneous events (*Iliad* 14. 513-17). Through a list, even a bare list of heroes' names, a poet can multiply a single image, or a single action, a number of times–and with great economy. A list, therefore, can evoke the turmoil of battle, the frenzy, and the scramble. And, in that it puts names to faces, it individualises the actors: these warriors are *people*.

The Nereid-list, likewise, looks ahead to a climactic moment: Achilleus' decision to return to the fighting, and to die. Thetis cries out (*Iliad* 18. 35-7), grieving with Achilleus and at the same time mourning his approaching death. Her sister-nymphs gather to weep with her. And Homer holds back his narrative to name these nymphs of the sea. His steady accumulation of Nereid-mourners, whom he presents one by one, marks a high point in the story. The Nereid-list is not, as the Chadwicks claim, an inappropriate interpolation of learned material.[35] Rather, at this moment of double sorrow, the list is both moving and (by virtue of the phonological and semantic qualities discussed above) beautiful. Thetis' sorrow–and that of her sisters–is the sorrow of sympathy for Achilleus in his grief; and, more to the point, it is the sorrow of anticipation: she

[35] *Growth of Literature*, 1 (Cambridge, 1932), 520.

knows that he will not return to his home (18. 59-60).

The list of Priam's sons (*Iliad* 24. 249-51) looks to the future even as it shows us something of Priam's present pain. In these lines, in which the words of the narrator and Priam are fused, we hear that the old king inveighs against nine of his sons, all of whom he will describe as worthless; he will contrast these with his courageous warrior sons (257-8), all now dead. This list catches the pathos of the moment; none of these sons can replace the son unnamed, who is at the forefront of Priam's mind and ours–Hektor.[36] And yet, through its quickening pace, the list indicates Priam's renewed energy and it looks ahead to the great moment of the epic: when Priam, with the courage of desperation, supplicates Achilleus for the return of the body of his son, Hektor.

As regards Homer's catalogues, I shall single out two: the catalogue of Zeus' liaisons and the Catalogue of Ships. Zeus' catalogue (*Iliad* 14. 315-27) functions in the same way as any of the lists which I have mentioned above. But because this episode is set on Olympos amongst the gods it has an amusing edge. This catalogue is intended to convey the urgency and intensity of desire in a novel situation: Zeus, so often the seducer, has been seduced–by his own wife. The humour, however, extends further than this: is this the appropriate moment to recall one's past liaisons, and so readily? If in any other circumstances Zeus had offered his wife such a catalogue, his lack of tact would have been disastrous. At this point of the narrative, however, it allows us to measure Hera's present determination not to be angered, despite this inept, and certainly provocative, declaration.

Finally, I look once more at the Catalogue of Ships. When Homer, near the beginning of the *Iliad*, introduced the leaders who came to Troy, it was natural–given the numbers involved–that he should do so in list-form. The result is the Catalogue of Ships, an expanded list, designed not just to gratify the pride of his listeners or to make a statement about the mass of troops assembled. This catalogue and the Trojan catalogue together, through their scope and elaboration, point to the scale and significance of all events and outcomes in the *Iliad*: they are designed to arouse in the audience expectations of a great story.

Let me now summarise what is it about a list or a catalogue which arouses the enthusiasm of an audience. The first three factors which

[36] For a list delivered to achieve a similar purpose to give emphasis to a point at issue through contrast see *Iliad* 13. 770-2.

I set out below could apply to lists both oral and written; the fourth, fifth and sixth will be the qualities which make direct appeal to a listening audience. These are the qualities which distinguish the list performed from the list on the printed page. What is it, then, about a list which appeals to an audience? First, if it is a traditional list, its integrity and the relevance of its content to the audience. Second, if it is an invented list, its imaginative presentation–its novelty, its wit, or the beauty of its imagery. Third, its contribution to or evaluation of the ongoing narrative. Fourth, its style–in which I include all aspects of presentation (pace, diction, poetics). This is not to say, I might add, that written lists are compiled without attention to style: where the list-maker's concern for poetics is observable, it is clear that the list has been designed for performance of a kind, if only by the solitary reader for his own pleasure. The fifth factor is the special effort of memory which lies beneath the surface of the text. And, last, the sustained and therefore exciting nature of such a performance. In summary, the listeners' response to a list sung will be a compound of interest, delight, admiration, and excitement. This will act as a kind of charm which will bind them to the list. It will keep them silent and absorbed for the sake of, and for the pleasure of, listening. Homer's lists, I suggest, are amongst the many special moments of his song. They do not, as Beye suggests, reduce 'the ornate emotional, pictorial and dramatic material to its essentials', nor do they simply reflect an 'indexing, collecting mentality': rather, they can bring excitement and pleasure to oral performance even as they enrich the narrative in their own, often individual, ways.[37]

To conclude, then, I urge that we should pay attention to Homer's lists and catalogues as components of, rather than as interludes in, performance. To be sure, they are rarely an essential ingredient of the story itself; rather, they are used at different times, and in different ways, to regulate, to structure and to colour the telling. But they are undeniably part of the performance. The major lists and catalogues, by virtue of the number of entries which they include, are showpieces. They are designed to give clear evidence of the singer's diverse skills as poet and as performer. His audience will appreciate his ingenuity and assiduity in working up a performance piece which demands in some cases careful rehearsal of traditional material, in others poetic craft, and, in every case, considerable practice.

[37] 'Homeric Battle Narrative', 369.

The demonstration of these skills is particularly appealing to listeners who, as occasional list-makers themselves, know how difficult it is to overcome the limitations of memory. What sets the accomplished singer apart, however, is his delivery: given his command of technique, his performance will be the performance of a virtuoso. List-singing or catalogue-singing on a grand scale is therefore a remarkable feat, as Homer himself testifies: a feat of exceptional memory *and* of performative skill. It is his listeners' involvement in the singer's performance no less than their delight in his achievement which holds their attention and draws their applause.[38]

[38] I thank Karen Ottley, Pam Gray, and Brian Gray, with whom I have discussed various aspects of list-singing and list-memorisation. Much of this paper was written during a short period of release from teaching duties funded by the Commonwealth Government Staff Development Fund.

CHAPTER TWO

HOMER AND AVDO: INVESTIGATING ORALITY THROUGH EXTERNAL CONSISTENCY

W. MERRITT SALE

INTRODUCTION: CERTAIN STYLISTIC AND STRUCTURAL COMPARISIONS

The analogy between Yugoslavian oral epic and Homer, first drawn for recent scholarship by Matija Murko, was made more precise by Milman Parry in 1933.[1] Parry identified striking parallels in formulae and formula systems drawn from the two bodies of poetry: each had noun-epithetic phrases with matching verb formulae, each placed noun-epithets in a fixed position after the verb, each repeated its phrases very frequently indeed. In the unfinished *Cor Huso*, Parry went on to speak of the need to compare *themes* (*Making of Homeric Verse*, 437-64), i.e., segments of narrative that describe a complete action, such as arming, or eating a meal, but he did not live to bring out a systematic study. Later Albert Lord, in *The Singer of Tales*, added *enjambement* to formula and theme as the areas for drawing parallels; and to qualitative formulaic analogy, as Parry had carried it out, Lord added quantitative, the comparable formulaic density of sample passages.[2] Then in 1990 appeared a very thorough study by John Foley of prosodic, phraseological, and thematic similarities among the *Odyssey*, *Beowulf*, and the Serbo-Croatian Return Song; especially valuable is his demonstration that both the Homeric and the South Slavic epic line are characterised *throughout* by three fundamental prosodic principles: a relatively fixed number of syllables, the

[1] M. Murko, *La Poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du XXe siecle* (Paris, 1929), M. Parry, 'Whole Formulaic Verses in Greek and Southslavic Heroic Song', *TAPhA* 64 (1933), 179-97 and in *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. A. Parry (Oxford, 1971), 376-90.

[2] A. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 144-7 *et passim.*

presence of one or more regular caesurae, and 'right-justification', the fact that the line of verse grows more rigid, is less susceptible to variation as we move from beginning to end.[3]

Other scholars have made other contributions to the analogy, and in 1993 I called attention to certain striking mathematical parallels among Homer, the Mediaeval *Song of Roland* and *Cantar de mio Cid*, and the Yugoslavian Avdo Medjedovich's *Zhenidba Smailagina Sina*. In all four sources, thoughout their texts, the nouns obey closely certain equations: the more often a noun occurs, the more different formulae and formulaic occurrences it displays. In any given passage of any length in the *Odyssey*, for instance, we know that about 2/3 of the noun occurrences will be formulaic, with a variability of only about +/- 7%, to as low as 61% and as high as 75%. Each of the other four poems behaves similarly: their nouns, and thus their texts, are formulaic throughout, and are *internally consistent*. Such consistency is surprising, but another fact is much more so. In all four poets we get virtually the *same* equations: that is, we have the same variables with nearly the same parameters. This means that we can take equations for any one of the poems (the *Zhenidba Smailagina Sina*, say), feed in the total occurrences of nouns found in a different one (the *Odyssey*, say), and make remarkably accurate predictions of the number of formulaic occurrences and different formulae displayed by the nouns in the different poem (in the *Odyssey*). All five poems are internally consistent in exactly the same way–across 27 centuries, the same laws obtain. They exhibit *external consistency*, a term I prefer to 'analogy', which, though accurate enough, is already used of a different process, that of forming formulae by imitating other formulae.

In addition to nearly identical parameters, these epics share another feature: about half the nouns in each poem that occur 13 times or more (call them 'thirteen-plus' nouns) display frequently-occurring (call them 'regular') formulae, phrases that are exactly repeated at least six times and sometimes much more often. In Homer most of these phrases are noun-epithets, such as 'swift-footed Achilles' and 'wide-ruling Agamemnon', while the other three display many more noun-verb formulae. But despite this difference, within each style we can recognise these regular formulae as the basic building blocks of the formulaic epic. It is they especially that fit into Milman Parry's systems of formulae, they that fill the major

[3] J. Foley, *Traditional Oral Epic* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1990).

cola, and they that–if they are noun-epithetic–complement metrically and grammatically certain common verb-formulae so as to yield a complete line of verse. When we examine the literate imitators of the oral style, such as Apollonius Rhodius, Virgil, or Quintus of Smyrna, we find that in some ways they show a surprisingly close statistical resemblance to their models; but they also show an arresting paucity of these regular formulae, these phrases that Homer and the others cannot do without.[4]

There has to be some reason for the extraordinary similarities that bind together the modern Yugoslavian poet, the Mediaevals, and the oldest of the Greeks. Their prosody is in fact very different. Homer uses a dactylic hexameter with three variable caesurae and from 12 to 17 syllables per line. The poet of the *Roland* and Avdo are much more rigid: the Frenchman can fluctuate between 10 and 12 syllables, but he has only one caesura, fixed between positions 4 and 5, and he must meet the requirement for assonance; Avdo is restricted to exactly 10 syllables and the same fixed 4-5 caesura. The metre of the *Cid* is not well understood: apparently the lines can vary from 10 to 20 syllables; there is a single medial caesura; the pattern of ictus is not known, but the poet seems much the most free of the four we are examining. Nonetheless, all four adhere carefully to the formularity equations. Why this internal consistency? And why on earth do they obey virtually the *same* equations–why the external consistency?

Since Avdo was certainly an oral composer, and the others obviously could have been, we naturally suppose that it was the demands of oral composition, of composing in performance, that lie at the roots of the similarities we observe. It is the oral poet who uses formulae, the oral poet who employs them consistently from beginning to end, who does so because he must, because the demand for rapid composition is incessant and formulae are designed to facilitate rapid composition. All this was made abundantly evident to Milman Parry and his assistant, who were standing beside Avdo from 5-12 July, 1935, and took down the *Zhenidba Smailagina Sina*. It seems inescapable that our four poets not only share an oral style, but were were thoroughly familiar with the technique of oral composition: they must have been trained in it.

[4] I stress the word 'epic', because, as discussion at the Hobart conference made clear, other oral genres such as South African praise poetry do not necessarily employ regular formulae–see R. Whitaker, chapter 13.

That does not mean that the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Chanson* and the *Cantar* were orally composed. Thoroughly trained in orality, their poets may neverthless have used writing: they may have been oral poets, or they may have been superb imitators of oral poetry. Mathematics has given us the certainty, not of oral composition, but of training in a pervasive oral technique. At least for now, we should think in terms of a new genre: epic poetry, either oral or imitative of oral, composed throughout by a technique indistinguishable from the oral. We might call it 'oralistic epic'.

PROBLEMS

As literary historians, we must naturally refuse to speak of oral composition unless it has been demonstrated; but as literary critics, why do we hesitate? Does not composition by an oral technique amount to oral composition? Why do some scholars insist that Homer must have been a literate poet?

The threat seems to arise chiefly because other scholars have demanded that there be an oral poetics, and that it impose restrictions on Homeric criticism. Some lines of interpretation are to be *verboten*, because no oral poet could possibly have consciously created poetry that is open to such readings. To this the scripsist (to employ Oliver Taplin's term) replies that if Homer's being an oral poet means that he is not to be interpreted in ways that appear to be self-evidently appropriate, then Homer cannot have been an oral poet. Scripsists freely concede that Homer employed a style originally created by oral poets; and they at least ought to concede that he followed the rules of oral composition so closely that we are right to speak of imitation. But they understandably will not abandon attractive interpretations that no one would subtract from a literate author; instead they argue that Homer owes his complexities and profundities to having been a *literate* imitator. And we should all be listening. If we really had to think, as Walter Ong once assured us we must, that Achilles is 'furious Achilles', a 'type-figure', and that Sophocles' Oedipus is 'incomparably more complex and interiorly anguished than any of Homer's characters', in order to believe in the oral theory of Homeric composition, then I at least would be doing everything I could to persuade the world to abandon that theory.[5]

[5] W. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London and New York, 1982), 152; on Achilles' interior anguish see W.M. Sale, 'Achilles and Heroic Values', *Arion* (1963), 86-100. Ong (in personal communication) has recently modified his position considerably under the influence of Foley's *Immanent Art*.

Adam Parry complained as long ago as 1971 that many an oralist was impoverishing the text by disallowing interesting interpretations on the grounds that no oral poet could have thought of them, and Anne Amory Parry engaged Albert Lord in a scholarly duel over this issue.[6] This is not to deny that gratifying readings can be *added* by conceiving of the text as orally composed; but when clever interpretations are *subtracted* by this process, critics are naturally irked. Of course those critics are free to argue, with the support of Thomas Mann, the New Criticism, and/or Derrida's principle of *différance*, that a reading can be valid whether it was intended or not;[7] indeed it is hard to see how oral poets deeply embedded in a tradition *can*, at the moment of oral composition, intend everything they say and that the tradition says through them. But many Classicists are uneasy over the loss of control that this seems to permit, and unhappy with interpretations of which the author may not have been conscious. And all literary historians will be uneasy if they are compelled to assume that *every* complex, ingenious or profound reading is *ipso facto* unintended.

Unfortunately, scripsists have gone beyond this merely defensive position. Without knowing much about Yugoslavian poetry, they assert that Homer is a greater poet than Avdo, and this greatness *must* be attributed to his having been literate. His poetry, they say, yields its treasures to a kind of criticism (New Critical, Structural, Derridean, or Neo-historical) that has been developed for written, not oral texts. Indeed, some will ask, how could such beautiful poetry possibly be produced by an illiterate member of the lower orders?[8] Scripsism eventually bases itself on scholarly class prejudice or cultural elitism, just as oralism once indulged a romantic enthusiasm for the illiterate bard, preferably blind.

To insist that Homer must have been literate, however, is not the only way to unshackle criticism from the chains of oral poetics. It is imprudent, indeed, since incontrovertible evidence of Homer's orality may very well one day emerge. We are not forced to accept the oral poetics of possibility. We can do what Milman Parry did not

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[6] Parry, *Making of Homeric Verse*, liv-lxii; A.A. Parry, 'Homer as Artist', CQ^2 21 (1971), 1-15.

[7] Cf. Thomas Mann, 'The Making of the *Magic Mountain*', in *The Magic Mountain* (New York, 1969), 717-27.

[8] A question asked in virtually this form, not of Homer but of the *Cantar de Mio Cid*, by a very learned British Mediaevalist, Professor Colin Smith, in *Poema de mio Cid* (Oxford, 1972), xxxiv, and *The Making of the* Poema de mio Cid (Cambridge, 1983), *passim*.

have time to do, and tackle head-on the problem of whether Yugoslavian oral poetry can achieve the heights of poetic excellence that Homer achieved. Svetozar Koljevich, among others, has brought out the greatness of certain poems in the Serbo-Croatian Christian oral tradition, while Albert Lord and John Foley have had interesting and important things to say about Avdo and the Moslem tradition; but no one has met the challenge of the scripsists face to face, with a full exposition of the greatness of Avdo, especially as revealed in the *Zhenidba Smailagina Sina*, the only Homer-length Southslavic poem readily available.[9]

This may be because the denigrators of Avdo have tended to be so off-handed and superficial that it is hard to take them seriously. Lord records his shock that Alban Lesky, whose scholarship he had admired, should have completely discounted Avdo on the basis of a two-page summary that Lesky read in Bowra–one that, ironically, Bowra had got from Lord himself.[10] Adam Parry accepts Kirk's judgment that the 'recorded Yugoslav material is mediocre by Homeric standards', and suggests indeed that it 'was never more than immeasurably inferior to the Homeric'; 'unlettered culture in Yugoslavia has been a rural, one might almost say, backwoods phenomenon'.[11] Parry told me that he was able to read Serbo-Croatian, and he knew of the *Zhenidba Smailagina Sina* when he wrote the passage just quoted; but he had not read it. More recently we have Hugh Lloyd-Jones, who acknowledges his ignorance of Serbo-Croatian, and even appears not to know of Albert Lord's translation, yet declares Avdo's poetry to be 'hardly as distinguished as, say, Sir Walter Scott's long poems',with which it has, so far as I can see, little in common.[12] These and other scripsists have been lazy; but the

[9] See Svetozar Koljevich, *The Epic in the Making* (Oxford, 1988); A. Lord, *The Singer Resumes the Tale*, ed. M. Lord (Ithaca and London, 1995), 203-11, with references; J. Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1995) which, together with *Immanent Art*, also offers a sophisticated oral poetics that permits complex and subtle interpretations.

[10] A. Lord, *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* (Ithaca and London, 1991), 95.

[11] A. Parry, 'Have We Homer's *Iliad*?', *YCS* 22 (1966), 210 and 212.

[12] H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Becoming Homer', *The New York Review* (5 March, 1992), 52-7. Regarding the language, Lloyd-Jones says: 'Lord seems to feel that a person ignorant of Serbo-Croatian has no right to express an opinion on this topic [poetic quality], and a knowledge of that language would certainly make it easier . . . But from Lord's own writings . . . and from certain other works . . . one can get a very fair notion, it seems to me, of the kind of thing with which we have to deal' (p. 55). Regarding Avdo's *Wedding* and his other long poem, he says: 'Summaries and translated extracts give us a general notion of the character of both these works' (p. 55). Lord's translation, *The Wedding of Smailagich Meho* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), had

only way to prove them mistaken as well is take on the obvious task of reading and criticising Avdo's poem.

It should not be necessary to say that this cannot be done properly by confining one's efforts to Albert Lord's translation. This volume, to be sure, is an essential supplement to David Bynum's edition and a vital avenue to a continuous understanding of a poem that is often very difficult in the Serbo-Croatian/Turkish original.[13] But whoever has spent years teaching Greek and defending the learning of it must insist that no text in a language very different from English can be properly evaluated in an English translation. Perhaps Lord's rendering suffices for the discovery of deep political and ethical insight, as well as complexity of character, in the *Zhenidba*, but only the original confirms it. Only the original conveys the traditional quality, and therefore the sophistication, of Avdo's language, or even tells us what all the formulae are; only the original reveals the prosody and style generally; only the original is a sure guide to the structure; only the original puts the characters and their complexity, as well as the political and ethical insights, fully into the context of emotion.

EXTENDING THE ANALOGY: POLITICAL AND ETHICAL INSIGHT

It is not possible to give here a full exposition of the Zhenidba, but I can state the essential interpretation, the impression most readers are likely to have after their first close reading. Note that I say 'readers' rather than listeners; listeners, with their presumed lifelong acquaintance with the underlying tradition, might have a more complex interpretation with which to begin. For the sake of the analogy and the value of our reading for the Homeric scripsist/oralist debate, we must be readers of Avdo here, and not introduce an oralist poetics yet; but I shall avoid uncovering interpretations that could not have been heard by an informed and sensitive member of a live audience.

The poem, set in sixteenth-century Bosnia and Budapest at the time of Suleiman the Magnificent, begins with an assumption of the supreme value of the heroic code: the young man, Meho, wants to

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been in print for eighteen years when Lloyd-Jones published this statement. How would Lloyd-Jones have responded to a scholar who approached Homer, and the Greek language, as he approaches Avdo and Serbo-Croatian?

[13] Avdo Medjedovic, *Zenidba Smailagina Sina*, ed. David Bynum (Cambridge, Mass., 1974).

be permitted to become a heroic warrior, able to boast and be recognised for deeds of valour on the battlefield. The purpose of heroism is apparently not the direct acquisition of goods for their material, or even their symbolic, value; at least our would-be hero has more goods than he knows what do do with, and is not interested in acquiring more. Nor is it the benefit conferred upon the Ottoman Empire and its Sultan; if the would-be hero is thwarted by the Ottomans he is quite capable of deserting them for the sake of heroic fulfilment. The goal is self-esteem, and the immediate acclaim of one's peers; social position and material reward are welcome as symbolic expressions of such acclaim.

The action begins with a meeting of the local pasha and his divan of lesser nobles in a tavern; present is Meho, who has been kept inactive by a father who is very harsh, and Meho's uncle Cifric. The young man utters a fantasy of leaving the Moslem empire and fighting for the Christian enemy. Alarmed, the uncle and the pasha agree that the time has come for Meho to take the place of father and uncle as the *alajbeg*. When Meho and Cifric arrive home, the father, Smail, consents to sending Meho with an older companion to the Vizier in Buda to get the commission, an *alajbegstvo*; the journey will be the hero's rite of passage While on the way they encounter Fatima, a beautiful young damsel in distress, whom Meho rescues and betroths. But Fatima is *kavgali*–she must be fought for–and the opposing champions have the political and military power to threaten war. So when Meho returns home to summon wedding-guests for his marriage in Buda, it becomes clear that these guests must be soldiers, and that there must be a large army of them.

So far in the story, then, we have heroic romance; when, however, the war actually comes, it entails no mere border skirmish, but a major military effort; the Vizier in Buda is a traitor and therefore a threat to the whole Empire. So the person called upon to lead the Moslem forces is not Meho, but the veteran general Talé of Orosac, the tough professional. After disastrous blundering by the politicians, Talé must lead the fighting of a very difficult battle, which he wins, though with necessarily grave losses. The most courageous figure in the fight is not Meho, but his uncle, who is the first to volunteer for what looks like a virtual *banzai* charge; after the battle Meho shows up with the enemy general Peter as his captive, a thoroughly heroic feat, but not one on which the course of battle depends. Buda is taken, the Vizier and Peter killed, money distributed, and the wedding eventually celebrated.

The poem is based upon contrasts and dualities. The first half is given over to the romantic and mythic modes, in the terminology of Northrop Frye; the second to the ironic (sometimes even satiric) and low-mimetic (realistic).[14] In the first half, the young, decent, idealistic, passionate, would-be hero Meho dominates; the second half belongs to the dirty, shabby, ridiculous, money-hungry Talé, merciless and treacherous with the enemy, deeply religious and in close touch with prophecy, capable of love, brilliant and realistic. The appropriate milieu for heroism is the Border, the Krajina, where the *ghaza*, the combination of *jihad* and border-raid so characteristic of the Ottomans, is carried out by the warriors in the poem; in contrast is the overall political organisation, essentially feudal, of the Ottoman Empire, with a *pasha*, answerable to the Sultan, sitting at the head of a divan of lesser nobles led secondarily by an *alajbeg*–we see the same men in both contexts. In the usual sort of Border-raid, the heroic code may be just the thing; but when there is major conflict between the Moslem Empire and its Christian enemies, war becomes a difficult and nasty business, and if the Empire is to survive, it must value religion to inspire, and money to pay, the troops; it must honour the brilliant, the old, and the tough even more than the heroic; its armies must be led by men who understand the ugliness and brutality of war and how to fight it. Courage and military skill are shared between Border and Empire, but the other values diverge.

Why is heroism not enough? The poem offers its answers through various episodes in the career of Meho. First, the frustrated hero may feel it necessary to desert to the enemy to fulfil himself; he cannot be counted on to sacrifice his lust for glory to the common interest. (We may compare Achilles' request to his mother that the Achaeans suffer so that his honour may be restored, or Hector's decision in *Iliad* 18 to remain outside the walls, a choice chiefly inspired by heroic ambition that proves disastrous to the Trojans and is later bitterly regretted: 22. 103.) Second, the hero must take risks that could prove disastrous: Meho must rescue Fatima, although realistically the sheer numbers of the opposition should have overwhelmed him; he must later enter the Vizier's halls, where he might well have been overcome by numbers if the Vizier had not been evolving a more complex trap; he cannot avoid that trap by simply taking Fatima back home, or the maidens will make fun of

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[14] N. Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), 34 ('low-mimetic' and 'realistic'), 186-206 ('romance'), and 223-9 ('ironic' and 'satiric').

him. (Similarly Hector says in *Iliad* 22. 104-8 that he must stay outside the city, 'out of shame before the Trojans and 'Trojan women'.) Third, he must *avoid* certain risks: he cannot volunteer for the mass *banzai* charge, where individual glory will be obscured; instead he captures General Peter, a splendid but largely superfluous event.

The *Iliad* too is aware of the limitations of heroism. Not only does it lure Hector and Achilles into choices damaging or disastrous to their cultures, but it is a tragic political fact of Achaean life that the heroic code can be at the mercy of a moody and unstable commander, Agamemnon, who is capable of trampling all over it with such dreadful consequences. Similarly it is tragic for Troy that it lacks some means of preventing a Hector from taking disastrous action for the sake of heroism. Homer, like Avdo, sets out other values–domestic love (Hector and Andromache, Vuk and his lady love), erotic love (Paris and Helen, Meho and Fatima), power (Agamemnon, the Vizier), and success (Odysseus and Talé). The two poets juxtapose these values differently, of course, since the *Iliad*'s vision is essentially tragic, while Avdo is composing a blend of mythic romance and ironic realism; for Avdo the tragic possibilities of heroism are implied, not realised. For this reason it is useless to ask which poet sees more deeply into heroism's nature and limitations; each sees appropriately to the poem's vision. But both poems understand war, and understand that to conceive of warfare as a playing-ground for heroic aspirations can be a disastrous matter.

It is important that sociey as depicted in the *Zhenidba Smailagina Sina* was a reality during the Ottoman years, whether or not it reflects precisely the reign of Suleiman. Suitably to the mythic mode, Meho and Talé are not especially realistic characters, so that if the poem is to offer genuine political and ethical insight in its ironic realistic mode, it can do this more effectively if the society they operate in is not wholly imaginary. (I am not implying, of course, that it *could* not do it otherwise.) It is harder to be sure about Homeric society, of course, since we are less well-informed historically. Suitably to the tragic mode, Homer's mortal characters are relatively realistically drawn, so that the poem's ethical insights are less dependent upon the authenticity of the political setting than the *Zhenidba*'s; but the scope of the poem can be enlarged if we can argue that the Achaean and Trojan political structures are at least possible. The Trojans, in fact, have much in common with contem-

porary *poleis*.[15] The Achaeans, seen as a collection of states on campaign under a collective commander-in-chief, reflect a perfectly possible structure; indeed an expedition of Mycenaean states *in the field* might have looked just like this, with the individual kings (Achilles, Agamemnon, Nestor, etc.) possessing absolute power over their own troops, but subordinate to a temporarily supreme general.[16] We have Avdo as an analogy for the capacity of oral poetry to preserve times long gone by–just as we have the Serbian Christian oral tradition for examples of poetry that reflects earlier periods, poetry that reflects contemporary society, and poetry that reflects both.[17]

Character Analysis

The fact that Meho and Talé are not especially realistically drawn does not, of course, prevent their conveying important psychological truths, any more than a figure in a dream is so prevented. We first meet Meho, son of Smail, in the company not of his father but his uncle; Smail, the hadji who has made the journey to Mecca, no longer drinks alcohol and would be an uncomfortable member of the opening tavern scene. But Cifric, the uncle, is a warm protector of the youth, and indeed is presented as another father. An inadequate one, though; or else Meho, chafing at his having no glorious deed to boast of, would not share with the company his fantasy of leaving home and country, and running off to join forces with the Christian general Peter. Peter will receive him and indeed make him into his right arm, to lead campaigns against the Bosnians. We do not need Freud to tell us that Peter in fantasy is yet another father substitute, one that will help Meho to exact vengeance from Smail for the latter's checking and repressing of Meho's masculinity. Meho does not appear to be moved by sexual jealousy, merely by the more ordinary desire of the boy child to

[15] See W.M. Sale, 'The Trojans, Statistics, and Milman Parry', *GRBS* 30 (1989), 341-410.

[16] See W.M. Sale, 'The Government of Troy: Politics in the *Iliad*', *GRBS* 35 (forthcoming: 1995).

[17] Koljevich, *Epic in the Making*. A glance through this book is enough to show that the opinion of Ian Morris in 'The Use and Abuse of Homer', *Class. Antiq.* 5 (1988), 81-136–that society in oral poetry necessarily reflects contemporary society except for obvious efforts to create epic distance–is totally without foundation.

take over his father's power and his position–in this instance, as heroic warrior.

Later in the poem we get some insight into why Meho is so angry with his father: Smail is very harsh and demanding. Compelled by the uncle and by Meho to let the boy go to Budapest to ges his commission, Smail tells him that if he should hear any evil of him, 'by my faith in God I shall have no son'–not because he will disown him, but because he will kill him. Smail sends him off to get dressed, and haughtily pronounces that on his return he will inspect Meho and decide whether he is worthy to take command. After Meho returns from Budapest, he challenges his father: while telling the story of his adventures, he asserts that he did not rescue the damsel in distress, because his father had told him to stay out of trouble. At this, Smail becomes enraged and very nearly does kill his son; Meho's companion must intercede physically, to save Meho's life, and verbally, by placating the old man and giving him the true account.[18] In all fairness, let us recognise that Smail is eventually very generous to Meho; but his generosity must be earned by strenuous efforts, and for most of his life Meho was not even allowed to make the effort that would lead to a softening of Smail's severity. Naturally he looks elsewhere for a more loving father.

Meho virtually drops out of the poem during the last half. He is present for the final battle, and his failure to volunteer for the suicide charge is certainly felt, though not expressed. We pay attention to him again only when he is feared dead and the Bosnian leadership is emotionally devastated. But this poem is not tragedy and Meho does reappear, driving General Peter captive before him. He has exacted vengeance, not from his real father but his substitute. The father-son conflict is not dismissed but allowed to reach its psychologically natural conclusion in a happy-ending fantasy form.

We used often to be told that we were not to find psychological depths such as this in Homer: some accused us of anachronism, of

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[18] As Lord retells the story, Smail is enraged because Meho has accused the Vizier of being a traitor and 'even threatens to kill his son for such a traitrous statement' (*Epic Singers*, 97). Smail's words in Lord's translation are: 'You whoreson . . . Did we not teach you anything about fighting for a woman? . . . To leave a captive maiden!' (see *Wedding*, 154). Bynum (*Zenidba Smailagina Sina*) punctuates a little differently, but the meaning is virtually identical. The story is the same as Avdo's in the 1925 version (identical with the one Avdo was taught), but different (the same in principle, though) in Avdo's 1950 version (see *Wedding*, 289 and 311) without being what Lord reports in *Epic Singers*. In the latter, Lord was presumably remembering a similar story.

violating time-boundaries, others of flaunting genre-boundaries, since oral poetry supposedly deals with flat characters, not round ones. This attitude appears to be giving ground to the welcoming of richer possibilities, and certainly Nancy Felson-Rubin's recent study of Penelope does an excellent job of uncovering psychological complexity.[19] Rather than rehearse her discussion, let me offer a few words about Hector instead. The Trojan champion is a puzzling figure, partly because Homer evidently likes him, yet lets him appear in quite a bad light on several occasions–most notably, of course, when in Book 22 he insists on staying outside the city to win gloriously or die gloriously, only to turn and run when he sees Achilles approaching near. His flight is preceded by a fantasy of an almost erotic encounter with Achilles in a bid for peace: Achilles might kill him *gumnon* (unarmed, but also naked), like a woman; no, there is no way to talk to him as a young maiden and young man talk romantically (*oarizein*) to each other. And his flight is arrested by Athena, who, as befits the goddess of self-realisation, gets Hector to restore his honour and recover his self, and permits him to die 'not with a spear in his back' (22. 283)–by means, to be sure, of a trick, for the mythic alignment of deities must be preserved. Actually he ought to have gone inside the city: it is what his parents want, and Priam makes it clear that it is what the city wants.

Thus Hector has no fewer than five wishes and feelings jostling and warring within him: the urge to obey his father and mother, and 'rescue the Trojans and Trojan women' (22. 56-7); shame before these Trojans and Trojan women over his earlier bad leadership (22. 105-7); the lure of heroism, of killing Achilles or 'dying gloriously' (22. 110); loving feelings directed in momentary fantasy towards Achilles (22. 111-28); and the fear of death. We are exposed to some of this complexity earlier, in Book 6, where Hector responds to Andromache's moving plea by first putting forward his version of heroism (444-7), and then insensitively dwelling on the fall of the city (448-53), Andromache's ensuing misery (454-9), and how wonderful he himself is (460). Then, of course, Astyanax's alarm causes him to take off his symbolic helmet, and he speaks and prays more as a father than a hero; he assumes now (contradicting himself) that Astyanax will reach manhood and the city will *not* fall. Such self-contradiction is Homer's signal that another side of Hector has

[19] Nancy Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope* (Princeton, 1993).

taken over. And Andromache's laughing tears cause him to take notice (*noesas*, 484) of her feelings at last, and speak much more sympathetically, adding only that it is his duty to fight. As a result of this encounter, Hector addresses his brother with compassion and respect, in startling contrast to his hectoring in Book 3. So at this point the loving feelings gain a momentary ascendancy, not over his sense of duty, but over his narrowly self-centered heroism. Here, then, is a complex person, flawed (as a deeply tragic figure ought to be) yet compelling our affection (as tragedy demands) because of his own capacity for affection.

We have matched a relatively simple Meho with a more complex Hector, so let us restore the balance with the most extraordinary of Avdo's characters, Talé of Orosac. No figure in literature is a more obvious challenge to the position that characters in oral epic are flat, not round, than Talé, the dirty, money-grubbing general of the Bosnian army in Avdo.[20] Talé surprises many of the Bosnian leaders since they automatically equate military capacity with attractive, or else fierce, looks and bearing; once we have seen that Talé's shabbiness is a much more accurate expression of military reality, we are not surprised by his harshness, his rudeness, and even his willingness to seem comic off the battlefield. War is a tough, hard business, and Talé is a tough, hard man. People who fight need to be rewarded, the heroes by glory, the ordinary soldier by money, and Talé's love of money reflects the common man without whom the empire will collapse. But there is much more to Talé than money. He is a consummately talented warrior. His tactics are realistic and skillful; he is very courageous personally; he knows how to talk to and inspire troops; he is deeply compassionate towards them. He is also utterly ruthless towards enemy prisoners as well as Moslem traitors. He is a deeply religious Moslem, accompanied everywhere by an alcoholic priest always ready to consult the Koran. Yet he fights no purely religious wars; he is insistent that the battle, half-won for the sake of the empire, must be pursued to the end for the sake of pay. He seems always to know what to do and what he is doing; but he is capable of profound bafflement and the acute anguish of loss. A fearful jumble of qualities, a highly complicated man; yet it all makes a comprehensible unity once we see that he is a model for the realistic warrior, that his complex character matches point for point the complex reality of full-scale warfare seen

[20] Cf. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 151 ff.

from the non-heroic, sometimes anti-heroic, point of view. Avdo gives the character of Talé its unity not by psychology, as he does with Meho as the hero's son and would-be hero, but through the unity of war.

Talé, as it happens, is a familiar figure in Serbo-Croatian epic, and it may be that Avdo's picture is entirely traditional. Apart from informal communication with John Foley, I have refrained from studying the tradition; I have wanted to be sure that my impression comes from the same source as my impression of the Homeric characters, from the text itself. Everything I have said can be very easily defended by reference to Avdo's pages, and I would be astonished if anyone who has read the poem carefully even in translation should disagree. Of course this means that the complexities of Talé's character may be entirely traditional. What right do I then have to call Avdo himself profound? Well, the profundity is there, in Avdo's text, however it got there. Some oral poet or other, or the entire tradition, put it there–the argument is not affected. And in any case, how do we know who is responsible for the profundity in *Homer's* text? The external consistency argument is still secure. I think that Homer was a greater poet (or at least produced a greater text) than Avdo; I think that he, or his poem, saw more deeply; I find him greater than the composers of the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Song of the Cid* as well. But all four are capable of profundity.

STRUCTURE

In the area of plot-structure Avdo is again considerably simpler, though that is in large measure due to his having responded to a request to compose a poem as long as the *Odyssey*. Instead of creating a subplot, he simply expanded the plot he inherited, taking advantage of the opportunity to deepen the psychology, to widen our sympathies, to intensify the colour of (and our pleasure in) the visual setting. His tradition did not normally produce poems of this length; if it had, the technique of elaborate subplotting would probably have evolved.

The deeper structure of the *Zhenidba* is founded on antithesis, beginning with the fundamental irony of the basic plot: we start off expecting a wedding, a celebration of love; instead, we get a battle, a celebration of death. We avoid tragedy, because no sympathetic

character dies; this allows us to preserve, exploit and deepen the romance/irony contrast. On the concrete, the visual level, the contrast is between Meho and Talé: Meho is clean, Talé dirty; Meho elegant, Talé in rags; Meho young, Talé old; Meho rich, Talé poor; and so on, over ground we have covered, and some that we have not. On this foundation we build an elaborate structure: border-raiding vs. murderous warfare; heroism vs. realism; innocence vs. experience; romance vs. satire and irony; good manners (Meho with the Vizier) vs. brutality (Talé with the Vizier); and so on, again over ground we have covered and ground we have not. The Meho aspect of reality is set out in the first half, the Talé aspect in the second. The two halves are joined, structurally, by the catalogues. In them, each hero gets his letter, setting out the heroic challenge parallelling the oath that the suitors of Helen once took: 'Fatima is *kavgali*, and we must join young Meho in his romantic quest for a bride'. Then the parade of heroes arrives, with nature heralding their appearance: 'There was no rain, but Mt. Kozara rumbled'. A romantic proclamation, comparable to nature's response to more ominous news at the end of the *Georgics*, or in *Julius Caesar*'s–'the heavens themselves proclaim the death of kings'. They are a splendid and a terrifying sight, as they arrive; and then the romanticism is violently undercut with the appearance of Talé.

To structure a poem in this way is to take a simple contrast between X and Y, add complexity by giving a great many details that reinforce the contrast, and then make a statement by moving from X to Y: the *Zhenidba* states that while what Meho means suits the border admirably, what Talé means is more important to the empire. There are plenty of antitheses in Homer–gods and mortals, Achaeans and Trojans, nature and culture, Hector and Ajax, and so on–but none that provides the basic structure. Homer even disallows foundational status to the contrast between fairyland and reality in the *Odyssey*; he tucks the true fairyland into Books 9-12, making Calypso and the Phaeacians transitional, both culturally and structurally, and begins and ends his poem on Ithaca.

In the *Iliad*, the structure that corresponds to Avdo's X-moves-to-its-antithesis-Y appears to lie in balanced annular or interlocking segments that give unity to books and groups of books. Keith Stanley has recently shown, in a brilliant study, how Homer uses ring- and refrain-composition to create these segments.[21] I have not

[21] Keith Stanley, *The Shield of Homer* (Princeton, 1993).

myself discovered similar larger patterns in Avdo, though Avdo offers plenty of examples of refrain-composition, of simple ring-composition, and of other closure techniques; it is not a difficult task to divide his narrative into unified books; and of course he has typical scene- and story-patterns.[22] Stanley's larger structures are different from these in that they give the appearance of enormous complexity, with larger rings being built up from smaller rings into corresponding blocks of considerable size. Thus he sees Book 17 as balancing Book 8, with, for example, Zeus' giving commands to gods in both books, and the prediction of Patroclus' death in Book 8 echoed by the news of his death being dispatched to Achilles in Book 17, and so on. Such complexities, Stanley believes, must be attributed to a literate pen, indeed a sixth-century successor (Cinaethus, perhaps) to an eighth-century Homer.

One of the problems with any analysis like Stanley's is that, while the forms it imposes on, or extracts from, the text are themselves precise, the actual words in the text may echo each other very imprecisely. It is therefore hard to prove that a ring exists unless there is an exactly repeated string of signifiers. Otherwise it is altogether too easy for other readers to reject the parallelism or find the echo to be quite accidental. We lack a good control, an otherwise similar text quite lacking any trace of ring-composition. Hence the oralist is free to say that if the presumed parallels require a literate Homer, they are either not there, or chance put them there. Since I, quite subjectively perhaps, find much of what Stanley says persuasive, I prefer to ask him how he knows that it rules out an oral Homer. He answers by pointing to Walter Ong's view of oral culture and oral poetry: Ong's oral culture would not, for example, encourage criticism of the heroic world view, while Stanley's Homer does criticise it. But Ong is not Avdo, who is at pains to reveal the necessity for a quite different world view from the heroic.[23]

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[22] On structures of this kind in Greek, Serbo-Croatian, and Old English poetry see Foley, *Oral Epic Tradition*, 240-387.

[23] Stanley also asserts that the *Iliad*'s paratactic style is 'governed by methods of organization that produce recursive structures of a complexity foreign to extemporized poetry' (p. 268); foreign, that is, to Ong's concept of extemporised poetry–and it is misleading to call all oral poetry extemporised. Sometimes Stanley adduces Parry instead of Ong: 'The conscious use of verbal repetition to establish structural connections between one part of the poem and another was expressly excluded from Parry's considerations, and his theory, from the start' (p. 275); actually Parry, at least in the passage Stanley sends us to, says that such verbal repetition is not formulaic; he does not rule out its use by oral poets. And if he had, what of it? We need

Stanley's best point in favour of a literate poet arises from his book's main achievement, the general structural analysis: he thinks (p. 280) that the book-divisions, the adjustments in them, and the structures that give unity to a 7:5:5:7 book-grouping, all point to literacy, and are the work of a poet preparing the text for continuous recitation at the sixth-century Panathenaea. This work, he thinks, is not merely a matter of adding formal closures and openings to the books, though such are added, but of extensive revision: not only were the larger structures adjusted to the Panathenaea, but other material was included, suitable to the festival and to Athens itself. Of course minor additions by a literate poet to pre-existing orally-created material would not hurt our search for external consistency;[24] Stanley, however, wants a 'thoroughgoing reworking' (p. 284) by a literate pseudo-oral imitator. But why could not an oral poet, aware of the needs of the occasion, have done what Stanley wants? Is it because the oral poet that Stanley considers incapable of this achievement is the oral poet that emerges from the pages of Ong, Havelock, Notopoulos, and other scholars, not the oral poet speaking in his own voice?[25]

This is not to denigrate Stanley's very considerable achievement, the structural analyses themselves, or to deny that they pose a gen-

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to look not at Parry, but at Avdo, who does use such repetition. Again, the *Iliad*'s 'recreative, inventive and ironic use of traditional language' indicates that the text is 'at some remove from its roots in oral tradition' (p. 278). Here, and so often as we read him, we want Stanley to send us to some oral poetry; but sadly Stanley contents himself with adducing a few unsatisfactory remarks by modern scholars.

[24] In other words, we might have, during the preparations for the first Panathenaea, a rhapsode who has memorised the poem, and who dictates it to a scribe. A literate poet might then introduce a few passages and perhaps adjust a few others, and leave us with all the traces of oral composition we have been uncovering in setting forth the successive analogies.

[25] Stanley derives his conception of Cinaethus' composing the final version of the *Iliad* for the Panathenaea from Minna Skafte-Jensen, *The Homeric Question and the Oral-formulaic Theory* (Copenhagen, 1980), 158-66; only Skafte-Jensen's Cinaethus is an oral poet. Granted, if we assign to Skefte-Jensen's Cinaethus the task of creating the larger structures that Stanley requires, he has his work cut out for him; but he has an easier job than Stanley's Cinaethus, a literate poet who must compose long passages of poetry that matches inherited poetry composed orally, and match it with, literally, mathematical precision. We can make life simpler for him by making him an accomplished rhapsode, and arguing that the annular and interlocking structures, large and small alike, were already part of the oral technique, and had been evolved for the preservation, first by poets, later by rhapsodes, of long poems with complicated plots, the order of whose elements is harder to remember because they do not always occur in simple time sequence.

uine challenge to oralists: the larger annular and interlocking forms he uncovers have not yet, to my knowledge, been isolated in South-Slavic oral poetry, and I do not find them in the *Zhenidba*. Here is one place where analogy breaks down. There is another place as well, a matching place: the complexities of Avdo are all founded on a simple duality, Meho/hero/border/romance/myth vs. Talé/anti-hero/empire/irony/realism. The complexities of the *Odyssey* are founded on (at least) two triads. The first has as its 'thesis' Poseidon/fairyland/fairytale/nature, as set out in Books 9-12. Its 'antithesis' is Athena/Ithaca(Pylos, Sparta)/realism/culture, Books 1-4 and 13-24. Its 'mediator' is Poseidon-and-Athena/Ogygia-and-Scheria/magical realism/civilised decadence in Books 5-8. The second triad is simpler, the three people: Telemachus (Books 1-4 and 15-24), Odysseus, (Books 5-8, 9-12, and 13-24) and Penelope (Books 1, 4, and 15-24). This is obviously more complex than the *Zhenidba*, and the *Iliad* is even more so. The structure of the Homeric poems must be designed to include much more material than we find in the *Zhenidba*; the latter succeeds in justifying its length by continually deepening and enriching its basic contrast, not by attempting to include additional different contrasts, or by weaving more plots.

The *Odyssey* succeeds very well in matching its plot to its triads: because it is a homecoming, it can pass through the three different locales and give each a different culture, political structure, morality, etc. It can send the homecomer, the protagonist, through all three locales, and use the other two to fill out our picture of the primary locale, Ithaca, by letting them come to self-realisation as aristocratic wife and maturing son. Indeed the plot can keep most of the poem's parts in order without resort to or (so far as I can detect) employment of the elaborate ring-structures of the *Iliad*. But the *Iliad*'s plot–the Wrath of Achilles–does not easily organise all its material; indeed scholars for that reason have let one or more of Books 3-7, 10, 13-14, or 23 drop from the poem. There are various aesthetic reasons for refusing to follow them; Stanley's analysis offers us one good one. The smaller annular and interlocking structures convey have their own beauties; but the larger structures are necessary for keeping the *Iliad*'s vast material in order.

But *cui bono*? I, as a reader or listener, can derive pleasure from following the ring-structure of the description of the Shield of Achilles, or of the Catalogue of Ships; I can link together the matching elements in Books 1 and 24, despite the distance, because they form a beginnning and an end; but I have trouble keeping the

match-up between Books 8 and 17 in mind even after reading Stanley's account carefully, and I do not believe that even the most acute *listener* would hear it. Both books give medial plot developments looking forward to very different scenes and situations, the embassy and Achilles' preliminary return. But I can well believe that the match-up was put there by the poet to gratify his own sense of order–and thus to enable him to remember the sequence of elements that work best. In other words it permits the obvious conjecture (adumbrated in note 25 above), that the large annular and interlocking structures are part of the *oral* style. The ring-composition that is characteristic of all the smaller sections is extended to link much larger ones, whenever the plot itself provides an insufficient ordering principle. And the Wrath of Achilles does not give the sequence of all the elements. Much of the material in Books 6 and 7 (not the wall) might come after Books 13 or 14; 5 and the Book beginning of 6 could come after Book 7; the order of many a battle-scene might be different; and so on. The larger annular structures might well exist to aide the memory of oral composers of long poems.

Thus in the two places where analogy between Yugoslav and Homeric epic breaks down, we encounter no evidence whatever for written composition. Avdo indeed lacks the thematic complexity of Homer. And he lacks the devices used to keep the themes in order: the relatively complicated plot of the *Odyssey*, the large annular structures of the *Iliad*. But Avdo does not come from a tradition of long-poem composition. Homer very likely did; at least he relied, for the dissemination of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, upon a tradition of *listening* to long poems. The use of complex plots to order complex themes could well have been evolved by oral poets. And the use of ring-composition for this purpose seems almost tailor-made by and for oral poets.[26]

STYLE

In the area of metre and diction, Avdo certainly looks far simpler. He apparently has a trochaic pentameter line, with a single caesura invariably after the fourth syllable, and the regular and traditional

[26] It was thematic at the Hobart conference that the origin of ring-composition was oral: cf. Ian Worthington, chapter 10.

formulae for his characters are largely colourless; compare this with Homer's hexameter line, capable of anywhere from 12 to 17 syllables, compare it with his three caesurae, themselves capable of variation, compare it with his magnificent collection of noun-epithet formulae of varying lengths and highly colourful, and Avdo seems impoverished by the comparison. Once he has mastered this line, Homer can let much beautiful poetry compose itself; Avdo apparently must resort to a variety of devices to keep his verse from being dull.

But John Foley's recent anaysis of Slavic and Indo-European epic style in *Traditional Oral Epic* corrects this impression most elegantly. The line is not really trochaic, but has primary ictus at positions 3 and 9, secondary at 1 and 5, the other syllables indeterminate. The second, the long, colon is formed by three rules: short words precede long words; but an initially accented disyllable may freely occupy 9-10; a medially accented trisyllable occupies 8-10 if the colon has two trisyllables. The first colon is more flexibly formed, following the nearly universal Indo-European principle of right-justification, that the verse is always more rigid at the end. These rules must be followed; within them, the poet uses a variety of devices that enable rapid composition with aesthetic effect: terracing (initial pleonasm), internal and end-line rhyming, assonance and alliteration, formulae, etc. So Foley's analysis ultimately strengthens the analogy between Homer and Avdo, since the basic principles that underlie the rules for Slavic verse just adumbrated are shared by both poets: fixed number of syllables, invariable caesura, and right-justification.

Within these principles the rules for the two traditions diverge, and the Greek formulae are more colourful than the Serbo-Croatian. I suspect that this is due to the fact that the shorter Serbo-Croatian line requires that a much larger percentage of regular formulae be noun-verbal, so that the opportunity for all the wonderful noun-epithets of the Greek verse, many of them very lengthy, simply does not exist. And the shorter line precludes the caesura-variation of the Greek. On the other hand, the very syllabic regularity of the Serbo-Croatian verse may shift colour and complexity on to the musical line. Here we are unable to compare, lacking specimens of the accompaniment to Homeric verse. In any case, if the tradition that Homer inherited is richer than Avdo's, we must attribute this richness to oral composition; no one wants to argue the Homer has a long *written* tradition behind him. Homer may have written himself,

but we must not use the traditional oral style he inherited to prove it. Any failure in external consistency in this area proves nothing.

CONCLUSION

We have not sought, in this chapter, to decide whether or not Homer wrote. That can be done, if at all, only through a stylistic analysis much more thorough-going than we can provide, and must be supported by a demonstration that it was or was not technologically feasible at the time that we think the poems were composed. Instead, our extended analogy has shown that Homer cannot logically be declared a literate poet on the grounds that an oral poet could not have achieved the profundities or complexities that we find in Homer. Avdo falls short of Homer for reasons that have nothing to do with orality vs. literacy: he apparently inherited a less colourful traditional formulaic stock than the amazing store that the centuries of oral poets handed down to Homer; he did not have available to him complex structures designed for the organisation of long poems, structures that the Greek oral tradition might very well have evolved; and he did not possess Homer's transcendent individual artistry. Homer may have written; but there is nothing about the actual differences between Homer and Avdo that forces, or even encourages, us to conclude that he did.

CHAPTER THREE

TIME AND TIMELESSNESS IN THE TRADITIONS OF EARLY GREEK ORAL POETRY AND ARCHAIC VASE-PAINTING

ANNE MACKAY

Comparison of early Greek traditional epic and archaic Athenian vase-painting has shown that between the two narrative media there are strong similarities in the technique of narrative composition:[1] the major verbal characteristics of oral composition–specifically the repeated formulae and the themes, subject to elaboration and expansion–can be paralleled in the repetitive visual formulations of the so-called narrative paintings in Attic black-figure.

Similarities Between Oral and Vase-Painting Traditions

There are three main types of similarity between poetry and painting:

(1) Iconography: the vase-painters regularly associated mythological figures with certain elements which individually or in combinations served both to identify and to characterise the figure: a male figure wearing a lionskin, for instance, is likely to be Herakles, particularly if there is also a knotty club and/or a bow or quiver in the scene. A female figure in a long peplos and full or partial armour is likely to be Athene, particularly if she also wears a scaly, snake-fringed, poncho-like garment representing the aegis. These elements compare with the particularised noun-epithet formulae of oral composition (such as πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ), in the sense that they are repetitious and commonly associated with a specific mythological persona.

[1] See E.A. Mackay, 'The Oral Shaping of Culture', *Scholia* 2 (1993), 97-116. Abbreviations used in this chapter: *ABV*: J.D. Beazley, *Attic Black-figure Vase-painters* (Oxford, 1956); *Para*: J.D. Beazley, *Paralipomena* (Oxford, 1971); *Add*[2]: T.H. Carpenter (compiler), J.D. Beazley *Addenda*[2] (Oxford, 1989).

(2) Figure-patterns: in many scenes, some at least of the figures tend to conform to certain patterns of stance and gesticulation. These patterns will often (but not necessarily) be associated with certain figure-positions in certain type-scenes. In a scene showing Herakles and the Lion[2] (Figure 1) the figure of the naked man on the right has the same form–that is, stance and gesture–as a figure in the same position in another scene with the same subject[3] (Figure 2). Both these vases are attributed to Group E, but the same figure-form occurs on vases from other workshops.[4] Such figure-patterns are like functional formulae in oral composition, such as the formulae that introduce speeches: they recur in similar contexts, marking the context as one of a certain type, thus contributing to the signification of the scene.

(3) Scene patterns: scenes with the same subject, like the two versions of Herakles and the Lion just mentioned, tend to have the same general composition, although this is liable to change over time. Some scene patterns, like the chariot scene, are more generalised, and can be applied to several subjects as can be seen from the comparison of three different kinds of chariot scene: Figure 3 shows a wedding procession complete with women bearing gifts,[5] Figure 4 a warrior's departure,[6] and Figure 5 a male and female (perhaps Herakles and Athene) in a chariot surrounded by other Olympian deities.[7] In all of these the schema[8] tends to be essentially the same: the *quadriga* (four horse chariot) heading to right, with a figure (or two superimposed) standing within it, another behind the pole of the chariot, one behind the bellies of the horses, and one to the right of the horses' noses. Some of these positions may not necessarily be filled in every scene, or there may be an optional figure to the left of the chariot body, or an additional one squeezed in behind the horses as was the case in the wedding chariot scene.

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[2] Würzburg L 245 (*ABV*, 133, 1), attributed to Group E.

[3] Würzburg L 248 (*ABV*, 134, 18), attributed to Group E.

[4] As for instance on an amphora attributed to the Amasis Painter, New York 06.1021.69 (*ABV*, 150, 2; *Para*, 62; *Add*², 42), where, in an arming scene, the figure at the right edge of the scene has the same form again.

[5] London 1868.6-10.2 (B 174) (*ABV*, 141, 1; *Add*², 38), name vase of the Painter of London B 174.

[6] London 1843.11-3.57 (B 185) (*ABV*, 304, 4; *Add*², 79), attributed to the Swing Painter.

[7] New York 12.198.4 (*ABV*, 258, 5; *Para*, 114; *Add*², 67), attributed as Manner of the Lysippides Painter.

[8] As defined by W. Wrede, 'Kriegers Ausfahrt in der archaisch-griechischen Kunst', *Athenische Mitteilungen* 41 (1916), 222-374.

Such patterns are like the themes or type-scenes of oral composition–multi-applicational and subject to elaboration and expansion, with the inclusion of more or fewer figures and varying amounts of detail in the depiction.

Since these types of visual formulation are consistently used by different painters in different workshops at different times, one may say that they are systematised, and in short that they constitute a tradition just as established as any oral tradition. What is more, this visual tradition conveys meaning in the same way as do oral traditions–and here reference must be made to John Miles Foley's theory of Traditional Referentiality,[9] whereby traditional formulations such as noun-epithet formulae derive their meaning not from the context in which they are used but rather from the tradition as a whole. That is, πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς ('swift footed Achilleus') is not just Parry's essential idea, nor is it likely to be relevant to any context in which it may occur (when Achilleus may be seated, for instance); rather it is metonymic, standing *pars pro toto* for the whole concept of Achilleus as he is presented in the multitude of different contexts (in the same poem and potentially in others), in which he is referred to in this formula. His fully-rounded, heroic persona is, as Foley says, immanent in the reference.

In the vase-painting tradition, the iconographic elements also refer rather to the tradition as a whole than to the context. Herakles does not need his lionskin and club for protection when he is for instance about to set out in Athene's chariot on his way to Olympos to be apotheosised;[10] nor, in a scene where his name may be inscribed, does he need them for identification. They are there because Herakles is the hero who slew the Nemean Lion, the hero who uses a club to rid the world of pestilential monsters, and this recurrent image of Herakles thus conveys not a contextual but rather a traditional meaning. Each image resonates potentially with all the other images where the same elements have occurred.

The early Greek visual tradition is functionally parallel to the oral tradition. That is, it works consistently in the same way. However, it flourished at a different time, as it began to develop only towards the end of the seventh century, while the Homeric *floruit* is of course

[9] J.M. Foley, *Immanent Art. From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1991)–herafter referred to by author's name only.

[10] As for example on the obverse of an amphora attributed to the Lysippides Painter, New York 58.32 (*Para*, 114, 10 bis), among many similar scenes.

usually cast back one or more centuries. There is a common culture, in that the myths are by and large the same, but the painting tradition is clearly a separate development, as can be seen from the fact that there is very little direct influence from oral poetry–the vase-painters pay no apparent attention to the helmet by which Hektor is known in the *Iliad*,[11] for instance, although it would not have been impossible to mark it visually in some way. In both media, the tradition controls the *form* by which meaning is expressed, and also the *meaning* that is associated with the forms: the two cannot be separated, for the poet or painter and the receiver are joint participants in the tradition. For a modern reader or viewer, only the former is readily accessible; the meaning can with considerable effort only be estimated in respect of a tradition in which we cannot directly participate.

Innovation Within the Homeric Tradition

Scholars working on the Homeric texts from the standpoint of oral theory tend to concentrate on identifying and exploring the traditional aspects, leaving the discussion of innovation to the literary analysts; however in a few passages one can discern certain manipulations of the traditional material which, though entirely *within* the tradition, seem to be innovative. A similar phenomenon occurs in the vase-painting, as will be demonstrated later. This line of investigation was prompted by a rather brief discussion by Foley (148-9) of two separate lines from the passage in *Iliad* 22 which records how Hektor, mortally wounded, recognises the fact of his impending death. Achilleus stands vaunting over him, gloating that the dogs and vultures shall feast on his unburied body. Hektor's response, begging for proper burial (22. 337) is introduced by

> Τὸν δ' *ὀλιγοδρανέων* προσέφη κορυθαιόλος Ἕκτωρ ·
> *Weakening*, Hektor of the flashing helmet spoke to him:

His request is denied, the threat repeated; Hektor's final speech (22. 355) is heralded by:

> Τὸν δὲ *καταθνήσκων* προσέφη κορυθαιόλος Ἕκτωρ ·
> *Dying*, Hektor of the flashing helmet spoke to him:

Both lines conform to the same line-pattern, one of the standard

[11] Κορυθαιόλος Ἕκτωρ–'Hektor of the flashing helm'.

lines for introducing speech with over eighty occurrences in the *Iliad*: Τὸν δὲ (*participle*) προσέφη (noun-epithet phrase).

The most common participle to fill the third position is the unspecific ἀπαμειβόμενος ('answering'), with 36 occurrences in the *Iliad*. As Foley points out (149), ὀλιγοδρανέων ('weakening') occurs in a line of this form only three times in the *Iliad*, while καταθνήσκων ('dying') is unique. These two lines are much more relevant to their context than is usual with Homeric formulations and this sets up a dynamic opposition between the contextual and the extra-situational meaning. The answering line-pattern is more than just a formula: it controls a passage of potentially substantial length that will follow, signalling that it will be a speech, that it is in response to what someone else has said, and that there is to be a change of speaker. Had the standard ἀπαμειβόμενος ('answering') been used in these two instances, the scene would have remained entirely traditional. As it is, the recurrent line-pattern creates a tradition-based expectation of Homeric speech exchange, and the noun-epithet phrase κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ ('Hektor of the flashing helm') has immanent within it the 'great and complex character Hektor, his entire mythic history summoned by the referential phrase' (Foley, 149); however this timeless traditional fabric forms the backdrop for the contextual specificity of Hektor's weakening and dying, and the participles establish a real and inescapable awareness of the present situation, all the more vivid for being set within the traditional framework. As Foley says, 'tradition instills this dramatic, heightened moment with associations that are more than climactic, as the immediate takes on the added significance of the timeless' (Foley, 149).

Foley does not discuss the other two passages where ὀλιγοδρανέων ('weakening') occurs in an answering line-pattern; however I believe that they form a consistent pattern with the death of Hektor. The first occurrence of the line is in *Iliad* 15. 246 with reference to Hektor, who has been sitting dazed in the dust for 350 lines since Aias struck him down in *Iliad* 14. It is significant that his collapse was expressed by a falling oak simile such as elsewhere marks a warrior's death in battle,[12] although he was not in fact killed. In *Iliad* 15 Zeus sends Apollo to reinvigorate Hektor. Apollo finds him, and asks what has happened: Hektor, in his weak state, responds

[12] Compare the deaths of Idomeneus (13. 389-93) and Sarpedon (16. 482-6).

(Τὸν δ' ὀλιγοδρανέων προσέφη κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ). Here the weakening will not develop into dying, as in *Iliad* 22, but it seems to have the effect of emphasising Hektor's injury as a near-death experience, just as did the falling oak simile.

The second occurrence of ὀλιγοδρανέων ('weakening') is in *Iliad* 16. 843, when Hektor has felled Patroklos in battle. In a situation parallel to that discussed above in *Iliad* 22, Hektor vaunts over Patroklos, who responds by prophesying that Hektor's own death is imminent; his speech (16. 843) poignantly introduced by a second-person variation on the formula:

> Τὸν δ' *ὀλιγοδρανέων* προσέφης Πατρόκλεες ἱππεῦ·
> *Weakening,* you spoke to him, Rider Patroklos:

This repetition of the line-pattern, referring to a different hero, Patroklos as opposed to Hektor, shows that the line does indeed constitute part of the traditional oral repertoire, rarely though it may be used; however it seems that it is consistently used in contexts where it is particularly apposite, unlike most formulaic uses. It is perhaps not coincidental that these striking departures from the norm occur in conjunction with death- or near-death-situations involving Hektor and Patroklos, whose deaths are linked by so many other structural devices.[13] Whether or not these examples were unique in the tradition, clearly they are sufficiently rare to let us see that the creator of the poem was well able to manipulate the tradition to achieve his own effects, in a few key passages using the traditional forms as a springboard for creative expression. There is a dynamic tension present in such instances between the traditional form of the line with its standard evocation, and the contextual reference that it contains, that makes the hearer aware at one and the same time of the traditional metonymy and the compelling contextuality.

There are different ways of creatively manipulating formulae. The passage in *Iliad* 6 when Hektor is parting from Andromache and their baby, Astyanax, to go back into battle provides further examples. There are tragic overtones throughout the scene, particularly when Andromache tries to persuade Hektor not to return to the fighting; this prompts him to explain why he must, in a very compelling exposition of the heroic code of values. Then Hektor turns to his little son (*Iliad* 6. 466-75):

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[13] For instance the prophecies which link the deaths of Sarpedon, Patroklos, and Hektor together.

Ὣς εἰπὼν οὗ παιδὸς ὀρέξατο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ ·
ἂψ δ' ὁ πάις πρὸς κόλπον ἐυζώνοιο τιθήνης
ἐκλίνθη ἰάχων πατρὸς φίλου ὄψιν ἀτυχθείς
ταρβήσας χαλκόν τε ἰδὲ *λόφον ἱππιοχαίτην,*
δεινὸν ἀπ' ἀκροτάτης κόρυθος νεύοντα νοήσας.
ἐκ δ' ἐγέλασσε πατήρ τε φίλος καὶ πότνια μήτηρ ·
αὐτίκ' ἀπὸ κρατὸς κόρυθ' εἵλετο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ,
καὶ τὴν μὲν κατέθηκεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ παμφανόωσαν ·
αὐτὰρ ὅ γ' ὃν φίλον υἱὸν ἐπεὶ κύσε πῆλέ τε χερσίν
εἶπε δ' ἐπευξάμενος Διί τ' ἄλλοισίν τε θεοῖσι ·
So speaking glorious Hektor held out his arms to his baby,
who shrank back to his fair-girdled nurse's bosom
screaming, and frightened at the aspect of his own father,
terrified as he saw the bronze and ***the crest with its horse-hair***
nodding dreadfully, as he thought, from the peak of the helmet.
Then his beloved father laughed out, and his honoured mother,
and at once glorious Hektor lifted from his head the helmet
and laid it in all its shining upon the ground. Then taking
up his dear son he tossed him about in his arms, and kissed him,
and lifted his voice in prayer to Zeus and the other immortals:[14]

It is a touching and singular scene, with the infant taking fright at the great tossing mane of the helmet that made his father look unfamiliar. Yet it is expressed largely through familiar formulations: true, ἀπ' ἀκροτάτης κόρυθος ('from the peak of the helmet') does not appear elsewhere, nor does the adjective ἱππιοχαίτην ('horse-hair'), but, while these serve to draw attention to the lines, the line-pattern is clearly based on the arming formulation as it occurs three times in the *Iliad*:[15]

Paris, *Iliad* 3. 336-7:

κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἰφθίμῳ κυνέην εὔτυκτον ἔθηκεν
ἵππουριν · *δεινὸν δὲ λόφος καθύπερθεν ἔνευεν* ·
Over his mighty[16] head he set the well-fashioned helmet
with the horse-hair crest, ***and the plumes nodded terribly above it.***

[14] In R. Lattimore's translation, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago, 1951).

[15] The fourth arming scene in the *Iliad*, that of Achilleus in Book 19, uses different formulations for the helmet.

[16] Lattimore does not always translate Homeric formulae consistently; here he uses 'powerful', while in the same line at 16. 137 he translates as 'mighty'. For clarity I have adopted the latter for both instances.

Agamemnon, *Iliad* 11. 41-2:

> κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἀμφίφαλον κυνέην θέτο τετραφάληρον
> ἵππουριν · *δεινὸν δὲ λόφος καθύπερθεν ἔνευεν.*
> Upon his head he set the helmet, two horned, foursheeted,
> with the horse-hair crest, ***and the plumes nodded terribly above it.***

Patroklos, *Iliad* 16. 137-8:

> κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἰφθίμῳ κυνέην εὔτυκτον ἔθηκεν
> ἵππουριν · *δεινὸν δὲ λόφος καθύπερθεν ἔνευεν.*
> Over his mighty head he set the well-fashioned helmet
> with the horse-hair crest, ***and the plumes nodded terribly above it.***

In the Astyanax passage, it can be suggested that the words λόφον ('crest'), νεύοντα ('nodding') and δεινὸν ('dreadful') recall the formulaic phrase δεινὸν δὲ λόφος καθύπερθεν ἔνευεν ('and the crest nodded terribly above it'), especially since δεινὸν ('dreadful') stands first in the line in the Astyanax episode and first in the phrase in the arming formulation.

It has often been observed that in the context of this scene there is a heavy significance in the baby's being frightened by his father's war-equipment, and of Hektor's taking the helmet off in consequence. The detail points the contrast, present throughout the whole passage, between Hektor the tender husband and loving father, and Hektor the mighty–and doomed–warrior. There are added overtones that emerge from this passage when one looks at it from the standpoint of oral narrative technique: the effect of the formulaic echoes in the language is to suggest, through their reference to the tradition, that what frightens young Astyanax is not only the helmet *per se*, but the helmet as one of the main elements in the standard arming scene. The narrative function of the recurrent arming scenes is to signal that an important warrior is about to enter an important battle: Paris duels with Menelaos in an arranged single combat with the potential to end the war; Agamemnon's arming precedes his *aristeia*, where his prowess as a warrior is demonstrated; Patroklos dons Achilleus' armour for the battle in which he will be killed; the implications of this scene between Hektor and his family are that the battle from which Andromache tries to hold Hektor back will be his last. As it happens, in *Iliad* 7 Hektor seems to be back within the walls of Troy, but this is not made prominent in the narrative, and the tragic potential of the parting in *Iliad* 6 is unaffected.

Examination of the formulae in the Astyanax passage can take us further. The helmet that so frightens the child is a κόρυς (which denotes a bronze item), while in the arming scenes the word used for helmet is κύνεη (which seems to imply a dog-skin cap, although the distinction does not appear significant in most Homeric contexts). True, κόρυς is the most common word used for helmet in the *Iliad*, occurring 42 times in comparison with 19 for κύνεη; however the choice of word in the present passage seems not to be arbitrary, for Hektor is referred to in the *Iliad* 38 times as κορυθαίολος ('with the flashing helm'), a word compounded from κόρυς, while his next most popular noun-epithet formula in the nominative case is φαίδιμος ('glorious'), with only 29 instances. I would suggest that within an oral tradition, the use of κόρυς in the context of Astyanax' reaction would be tantamount to Astyanax being frightened by his father's whole immanent *persona* as warrior within the tradition. It may also be significant that, although Hektor is κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ ('Hektor of the flashing helm') when addressing Andromache in 6. 440, he is φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ ('glorious Hektor') when he turns to his child in 6. 466.

A few lines later, *Iliad* 6. 494-6, Hektor makes a final speech attempting to reassure his wife and prepares to return to the battlefield:

> *Ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας κόρυθ' εἵλετο φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ*
> *ἵππουριν·* ἄλοχος δὲ φίλη οἶκόνδε βεβήκει
> ἐντροπαλιζομένη, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσα.
> So glorious Hektor spoke ***and again took up the helmet***
> ***with its crest of horse-hair***, while his beloved wife went homeward
> turning to look on the way, letting the live tears fall.

Line 494 in this context amounts to a very much abbreviated reference to an arming scene, overshadowed as it is by the arming scene echoes mentioned earlier. One is aware particularly of the word ἵππουριν which occurs in the same position in the line in the arming formulae. Again, however, it is a κόρυς that Hektor picks up, not a κύνεη: φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ assumes his warrior-identity, and his wife and baby will not see him alive again.

By this kind of analysis one can see that even in an atypical epic episode such as the homely scene with father and child, the poet never ceases to be mindful of his tradition; rather he manipulates his

traditional formulations so as to enhance his meaning in a way that is difficult to appreciate for those of us who are not active participants in the same oral tradition.

In this scene a creative and original poet is at work, not trapped on a mechanical traditional composition-treadmill, but fully competent within his tradition and even poetically empowered by it. He is *using* the tradition in an ingenious but entirely natural way, setting up a contrast, or dynamic tension, between an unprecedented context, and the standard traditional forms with their traditional referentiality, their echoing of the tradition-as-a-whole. That is, he is imbuing the traditional words and phrases with a contextualised meaning, placing them in a context which differs noticeably from the normal run of thematic patterns. There is an overwhelming sense of the emotional context of the present, narrated moment of time that is set within the essentially timeless framework of the traditional oral narrative equipment. And best of all, the context, unusually prominent for traditional epic, is enhanced and informed by that very metonymic quality that is the essential characteristic of traditional oral formulation.

In this respect, the Astyanax scene can be seen as exemplifying the same phenomenon as was identified by Foley in the answering formulae used in Hektor's death scene. Again it occurs at a highly emotional moment that is a climax of one of the major narrative interests, and thus of one of the major narrative structures, in the epic: the death which happens in *Iliad* 22 is set up from the scene under discussion in *Iliad* 6, with many intervening structuring references in between. It seems that at high points in the narrative fabric, there is likely to be a strong focus on the contextual moment in time, but expressed by a means that draws on the timeless tradition in the traditional way, so that here too the whole tradition is immanent in the reference, but set in dynamic tension with its context.

Innovation Within the Vase-Painting Tradition

A similar phenomenon may be observed in archaic black-figure vase-painting. The chariot scene, as was mentioned earlier, is a good example of a multi-applicational, theme-like type-scene, subject to expansion and elaboration. In its basic form it is almost emptied of meaning, although iconographic formulations can be added which supply a context. At some stage, a painter thought of adding a new

element: perhaps it was around 540, on an amphora signed by the potter Andokides.[17] On one side of this vase, the scene type is stripped to its barest essentials of a charioteer driving a *quadriga* without additional figures; on the other, it is expanded by the inclusion of a bird and a small figure to the right of the horses (Figure 6). The suggestion that this may have been one of the first scenes, if not the first, to include this figure is based on the observation that here the little man has some function: holding a wreath that may symbolise a competition victory, he seems to lead a chariot that, in the absence of other identification, may be taken for a racing *quadriga*.

However it did not take long for this innovation to become an accepted part of the developing black-figure tradition of the chariot type-scene, and thus to become emptied of meaning in its turn. Within less than a decade on comparative dating, a small figure fitted neatly under the noses of the horses appears quite regularly in chariot scenes, as in a scene on an amphora attributed to Exekias.[18] On a later amphora, Exekias makes the figure look more childlike, rendering it nude and turning it around to face to the left,[19] as does another painter.[20] Still, there does not seem to be very much intrinsic meaning attached to the figure; it has become simply another optional element in the chariot scene, sub-type family group.[21] Predictably, it is the master craftsman Exekias who reinvests the motif with meaning in his chariot scene on the reverse of his fragmentary amphora in Orvieto (Figure 7).[22] Here, the small boy is distressed, one hand to his head in a gesture associated with mourning, and he is being comforted by an old man. This must have been one of the focal points of a rather crowded scene.[23]

A variation that is substantially different from the rest is to be

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[17] New York, Bastis (*ABV*, 253; *Para*, 113; *Add*², 65).

[18] Louvre F 206 (*ABV*, 145, 12; *Para*, 60; *Add*², 40).

[19] Boulogne 558 (*ABV*, 145, 18; *Para*, 60; *Add*², 40); Beazley attributed the vase to Exekias, although this scene is closer stylistically to the Painter of London B 174.

[20] On Vatican 17701 (was 353: *ABV*, 138, 2 middle; *ABV*, 686; *Add*², 37), attributed to the Group of Vatican 347, Near Group E.

[21] That is, such a figure does not occur in scenes marked iconographically as mythological, such as the chariot of Athene.

[22] Orvieto 2747 (was 77: *ABV*, 144, 10).

[23] There are other variations on the basic motif, as on an amphora in Würzburg, L 267 (*ABV*, 258, 10; *Para*, 116; *Add*², 67), attributed to the Mastos Painter in the Manner of the Lysippides Painter, where the small figure has become one of a number of diminutive satyrs attendant upon a Dionysian chariot scene. Or there is the densely populated scene, Karlsruhe 61.89 (*Para*, 135, 1 bis; *Add*², 84), attributed to the Painter of Munich 1410, where one child has become two, and one of the horses responds to their attentions.

found on the reverse of the Vatican amphora of Exekias, painted around 530 (Figure 8).[24] As is immediately recognisable, the composition is essentially that of a standard chariot scene, complete with the small boy motif, except that the chariot is missing along with three of the horses. The positions occupied by the figures grouped around the horse comply with the normal positions of family members grouped around a departing chariot: the figure at the left corrresponds with the figure standing in the chariot (who often stoops slightly), and the curved back of the little dog is reminiscent of the curve of the chariot wheel that would be in about this position; the woman stands behind where the chariot pole would be, and her gesture is remininscent of the gestures of some women in standard chariot scenes; the second youth occupies one of the most commonly filled positions behind the belly of the horse–a position, moreover, in which the figure may be facing either way: here he manages to face both ways; the little boy has occurred before, and the man on the right corresponds to the figure often positioned to the right of the horses' noses. Most of the figures in the scene, then, can be shown to be drawn from the traditional repertoire.

Unlike in most chariot scenes, however, the figures are identified, as their names are inscribed beside them: Kastor with the horse and Polydeukes with the dog, *en famille* with Leda and Tyndareos. There are very few scenes in Athenian black-figure which identifiably represent the Dioskouroi, and none quite like this; there are very few scenes involving other subjects representing the figures in such an interactive manner and interrelated composition.

For instance, each figure interacts with another: Leda and Kastor are perhaps the most obvious, as the latter turns his head in violent torsion towards his mother in response to her gesture holding out the flower: the gesture is framed by the horse-rump, the myrtle-twigs, and Kastor's spear, and so attracts attention. Polydeukes on the left bends over the dog, which in response puts its paws *around* his leg (the dog was once painted white, now flaked off, which would have made this stand out more clearly). Tyndareos on the right edge directs his communicative efforts towards the horse, resting his hand lightly on its muzzle;[25] the horse responds by putting its ears back.

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[24] Vatican 344 (*ABV*, 145, 13; *ABV*, 686; *Para*, 60; *Add*², 40). For a more detailed discussion of the interpretation of this scene see E.A. Mackay, 'The Return of the Dioskouroi', *AJA* 83 (1979), 474-6.

The small boy seems rather isolated in the midst of all this interchange, but here Exekias was perhaps oversubtle, at least for our unrefined visual interpretative skills: it is necessary to look at the layers of depth in the field (which the added colours would originally have made clearer). Leda and Kastor are in the background, behind the horse. Tyndareos is in the middle ground, with the horse, and it is his *further* hand that touches the horse's nose, so that if anything he is closer towards us than the horse is. The small boy carries a red folded robe on a once white stool; the right corner of the stool is superimposed over Tyndareos' *left* hand (i.e., nearside), which puts the little boy in the foreground–this would have been much clearer when the white paint was intact. On the left side of the scene the dog's white body was superimposed over Leda's skirt, and its white paws were embracing Polydeukes' *left* (i.e., far side) leg, putting the youth into the same front plane as the small boy. Furthermore, Kastor, the horseman, is shown with a horse; Polydeukes, the boxer, is shown naked, as is appropriate if he is coming from the palaistra. It is *his himation* that the small boy is carrying (red, like that worn by Kastor), and *his aryballos* slung from the boy's wrist–the oil bottle characteristic of athletes: it seems that the boy is interacting with Polydeukes. Unlike the other acts of communication in the scene, this one happens in time: it is in process, about to be achieved when the boy reaches Polydeukes. Exekias has represented a temporal relationship involving purpose by defining it in terms of a spatial relationship. What is even more important, he has taken the motif of the small boy under the horses' noses from the chariot scene where it has come to be contextually empty and reinvested it with a meaning that is entirely contextual, referring only to the specific composition of this scene.

There are other indications of specific time or occasion in the scene: the figure of Leda is founded upon a common gesticulating-woman figure-type; normally there is no obvious meaning to the gestures in a scene, but here Exekias has put a flower into her outstretched hand and so made the gesture meaningful, the moment specific. Some of the meaning of the gesture is derived from Kastor's

[25] This gesture also derives from tradition: in scenes showing the harnessing of a chariot, there is sometimes a figure standing at the noses of the horse(s) already harnessed, adjusting the bridle. See for instance Athens NM 15155 (*ABV*, 82, 1 below; *Para*, 30; *Add*^{2}, 23), at an early stage in the development of the harnessing type-scene, and a little later Boston 89.273 (*ABV*, 144, 4; *Para*, 59; *Add*^{2}, 39).

turning his head towards his mother: again, violent torsion of this kind is not uncommon in black-figure scenes, where it is usually interpreted as indicating that the figure has been moving in one direction but has turned in response to some stimulus to face the other way. However here the specificity of the moment enhances the sense of movement interrupted, of a process rather than a tableau. Even the little dog's jumping up is a momentary action, not a sustained pose.

What is the effect of this? A special scene has been composed according to a well-worn traditional formulation, using largely traditional figure-patterns. The difference is that the formulations have been reinterpreted. In the traditional usages, they are fairly meaningless: the women's gestures are static, part of the woman-formula rather than communicative; the small boy is usually an appendage in the scene, offering no specific contribution to contextual meaning. Here each figure has a function that is interlocked into the meaning of the scene; none is extraneous; none could be removed without seriously affecting not only the aesthetic effect of the scene, but also its signification.

The traditional resonance also conveys something, although the full impact of this on a viewer who participated in the same tradition as Exekias is difficult to judge. What is clear is that we recognise the overall traditional pattern–the timeless, non-specific formulation of every-hero with a chariot, which marks the scene as belonging to the heroic world of myth and marks the occasion as somehow momentous. The viewer responds to the traditional forms of the figures, recognising them as participants in such a scene type; but in the recognition lies the striking perception that this scene is particularised: not only are the figures identified by inscriptions (that happens frequently in Attic black-figure, and, in the absence of inscriptions, traditional iconography–largely eliminated here–serves the same end), but their positions in the scene and their gestures are imbued with a contextual meaning that gives additional content to the normal formulation, in the same ways as the contextual elements in the Homeric passages earlier gave specific content to the traditional formulas and formula-elements.

An attempt was made above to show that in Homer the process was a dynamic one, working both ways, with the traditional elements bringing extra meaning to the particularised context, while the context possibly became in turn part of the developing tradition

(some slight evidence of this can be seen in the series of answering line-patterns using *oligodraneon*). The same dynamism, or two-way process, can be detected in the vase-paintings more clearly, because of the possibility of diachronic analysis of the development of the tradition: the tradition informs the scene, and over time the scene informs the tradition–that is, the reinterpretations become in turn a part of the tradition as it develops, and in turn are likely to become largely emptied of meaning, and subject to reinterpretation.

To illustrate this point, there are two further scenes which adapt a chariot scheme to the theme of a youth walking a horse. The first is on an amphora in New York[26] (Figure 9), attributed as Manner of the Lysippides Painter, and so a little later than Exekias' Vatican Amphora: the youth and horse occupy the appropriate position near the centre, another youth gestures from the left, and a *himation*-clad man sits on the right. Like the small boy, this seated figure is an optional feature of chariot scenes (indeed such a figure is included in the scene on the obverse of the same amphora, with the chariot of Athene), and so here too one perceives the adaptation of a traditional motif: the basic idea is the same as Exekias' but the execution differs in detail. The Lysippides Painter himself tried his hand at the same kind of adaptation on an amphora in the Villa Giulia Museum in Rome (Figure 10):[27] again the youth and his horse are centrally positioned, but this time it is a woman gesturing with a wreath who stands on the left, while an elderly, white-haired man sits at the right margin of the scene. In neither of these scenes is there the same kind of contextualised meaning as in Exekias' Vatican scene, and I suggest that here among the *epigonoi* of the master we find his innovation already in the process of becoming emptied of meaning and absorbed by the tradition.

In the diachronic study of vase-paintings it is possible to recognise such developments because we have extant evidence from the whole development of the tradition; but the texts of the Homeric epics, each crystalising a particular moment in the development of early Greek oral poetry, do not offer the same opportunity. Since there are many similarities between the oral poetic and the vase-

[26] New York X.21.26 (*Para*, 115, 6 bis).

[27] Villa Giulia 24998 (*ABV*, 255, 9; *Add*², 66), attributed to the Lysippides Painter. A research grant in support of this project from the University of Natal is acknowledged with thanks, and acknowledgement is due too to John Foley for his active encouragement of this comparative study from its outset.

painting traditions, it is possible that this examination of the phenomenon of innovation in one can suggest a similar process in the other, so that what in the Homeric texts may seem to be unepic and lacking in traditional reference may be perceived as representing a natural stage in the development of the tradition, rather than being potentially excised by the analyst as later, literary interpolation.

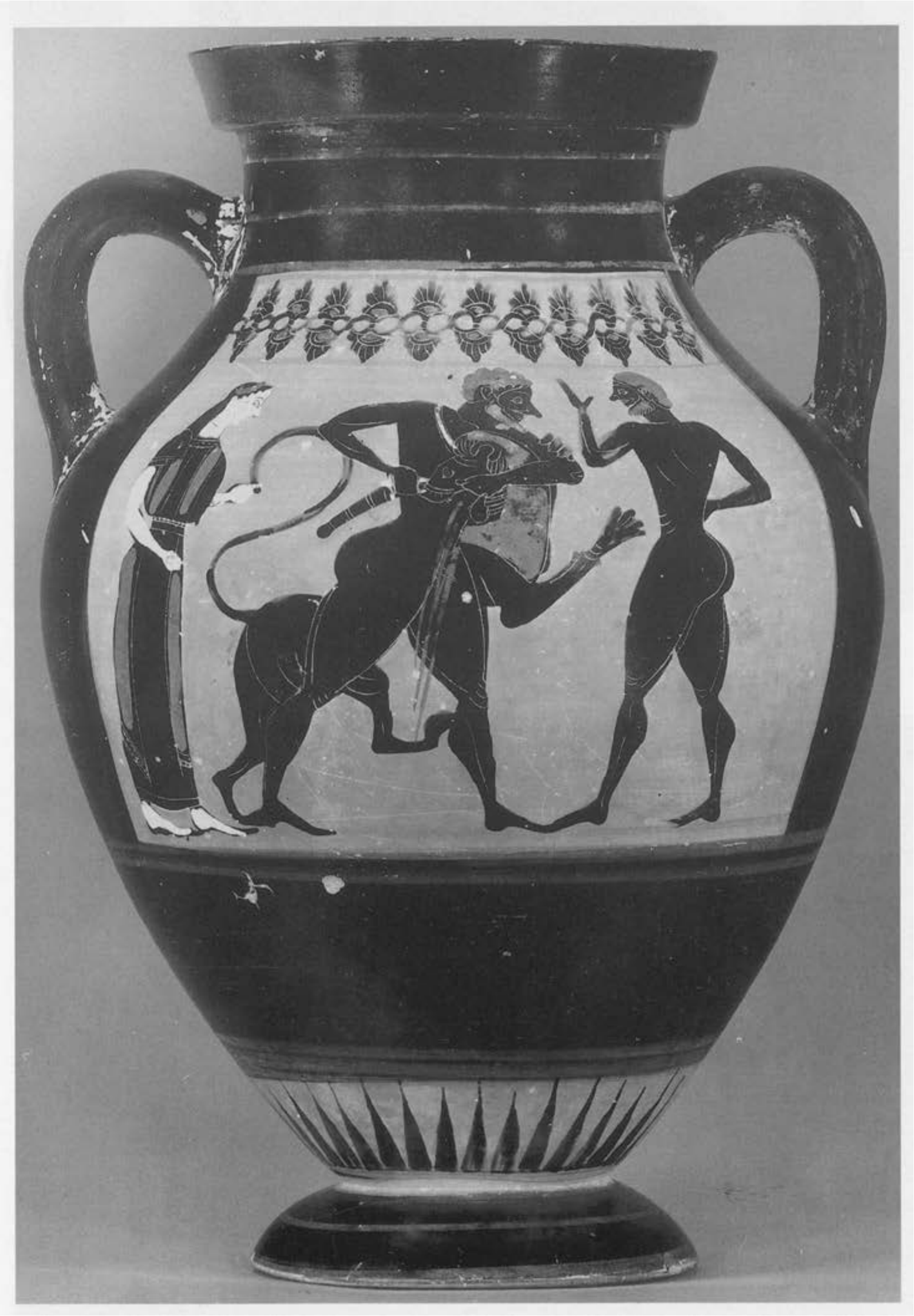

Figure 1. Herakles and the Nemean Lion: Würzburg, Martin-von-Wagner Museum L 245, Group E. Photograph courtesy of the museum.

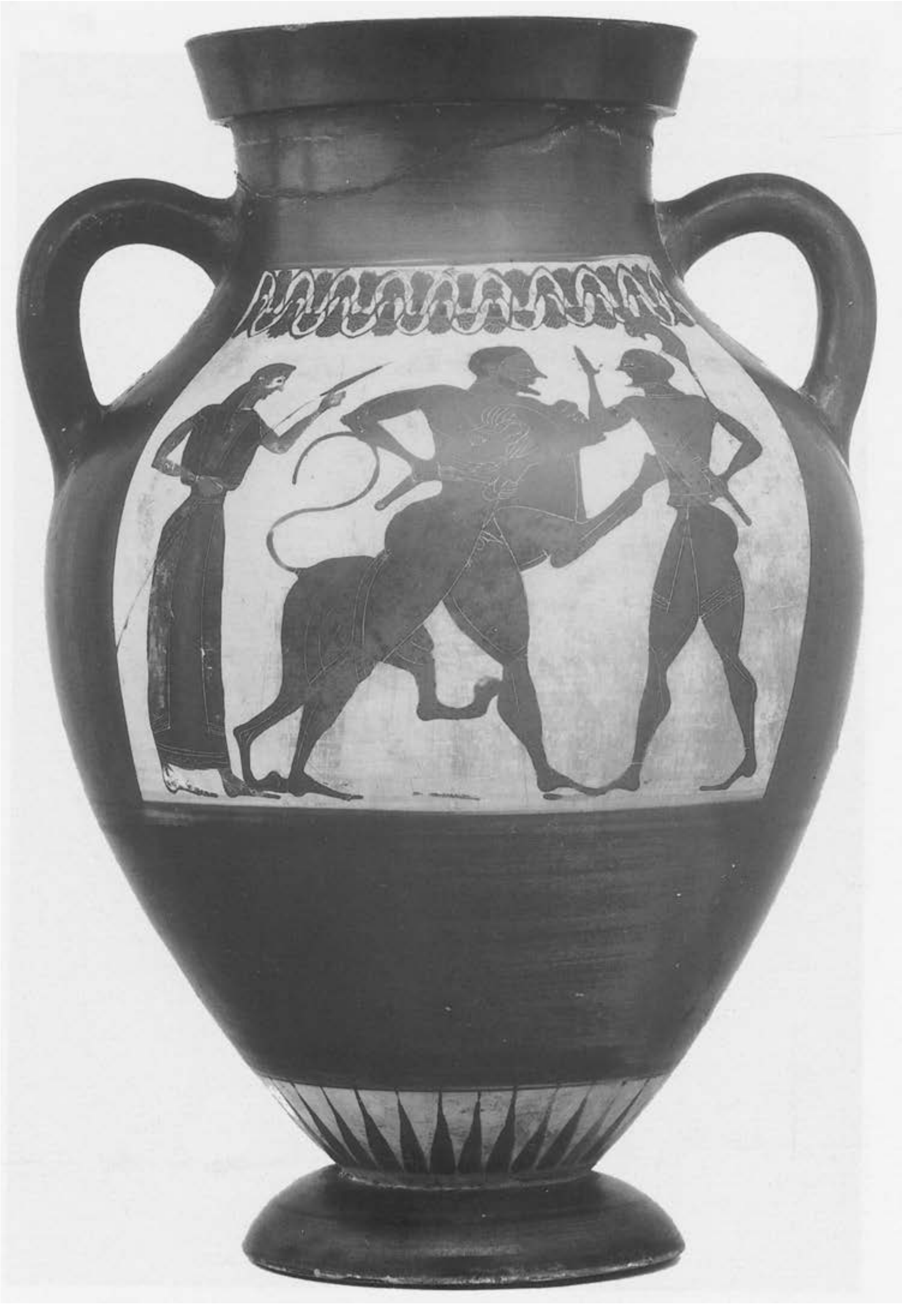

Figure 2. Herakles and the Nemean Lion: Würzburg, Martin-von-Wagner Museum L 248, Group E. Photograph courtesy of the museum.

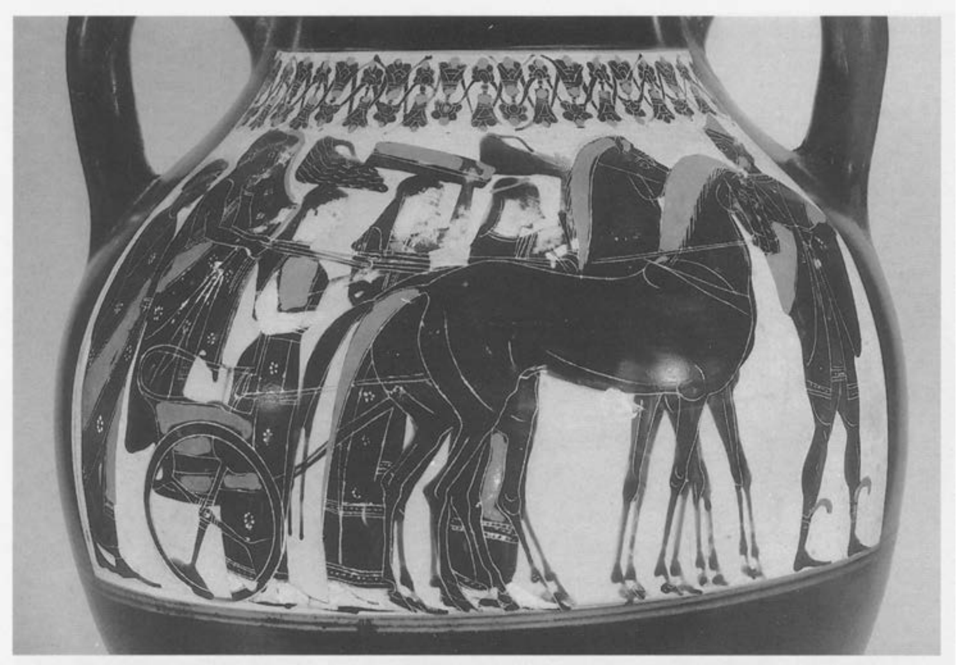

Figure 3. Wedding procession: London, British Museum 1868.6–10.2 (B 174), Painter of London. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 4. Warrior's departure: London, British Museum 1843.11–3.57 (B 185), Swing Painter. Photograph courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

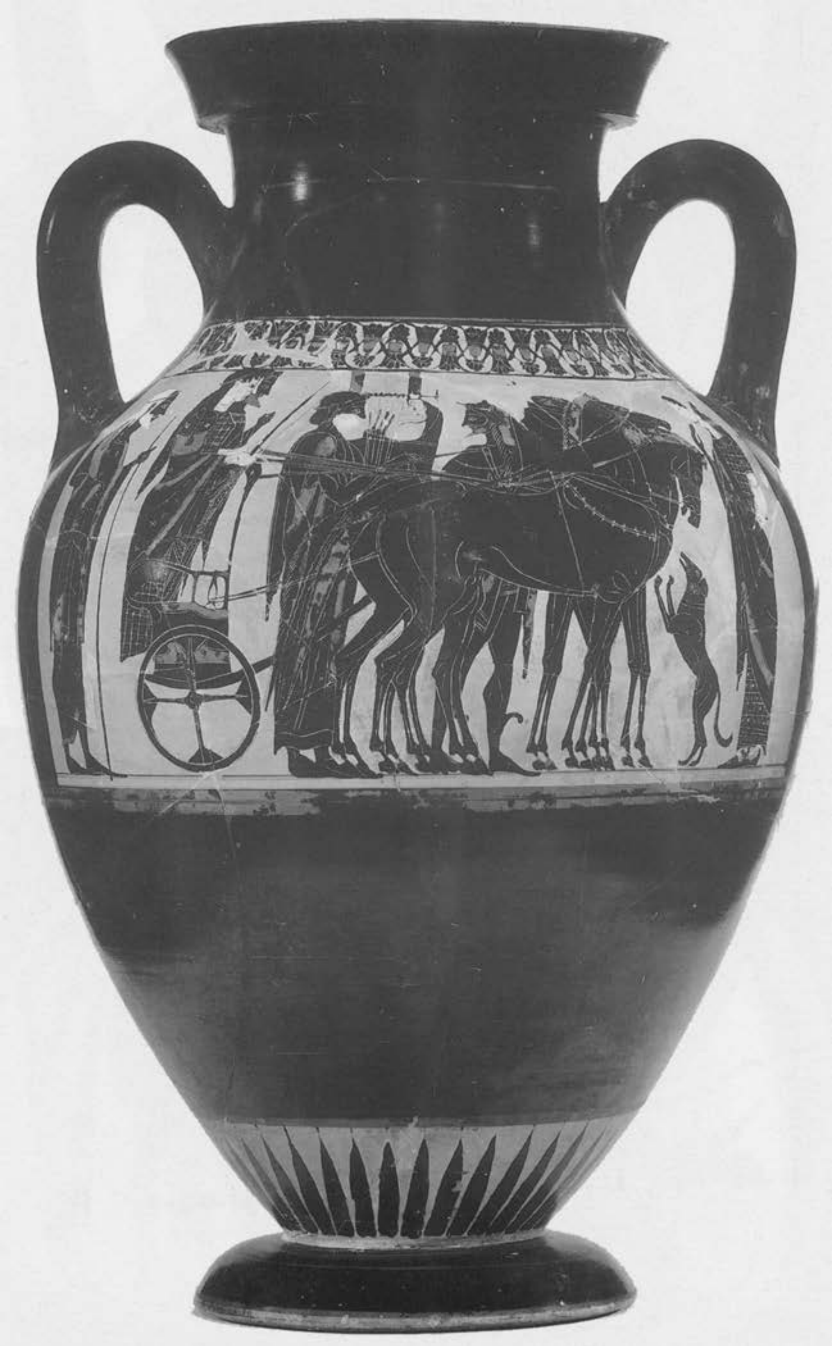

Figure 5. Woman and man in chariot (deities?): New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 12.198.4 (Rogers Fund, 1912), Manner of the Lysippides Painter. Photograph courtesy of the museum.

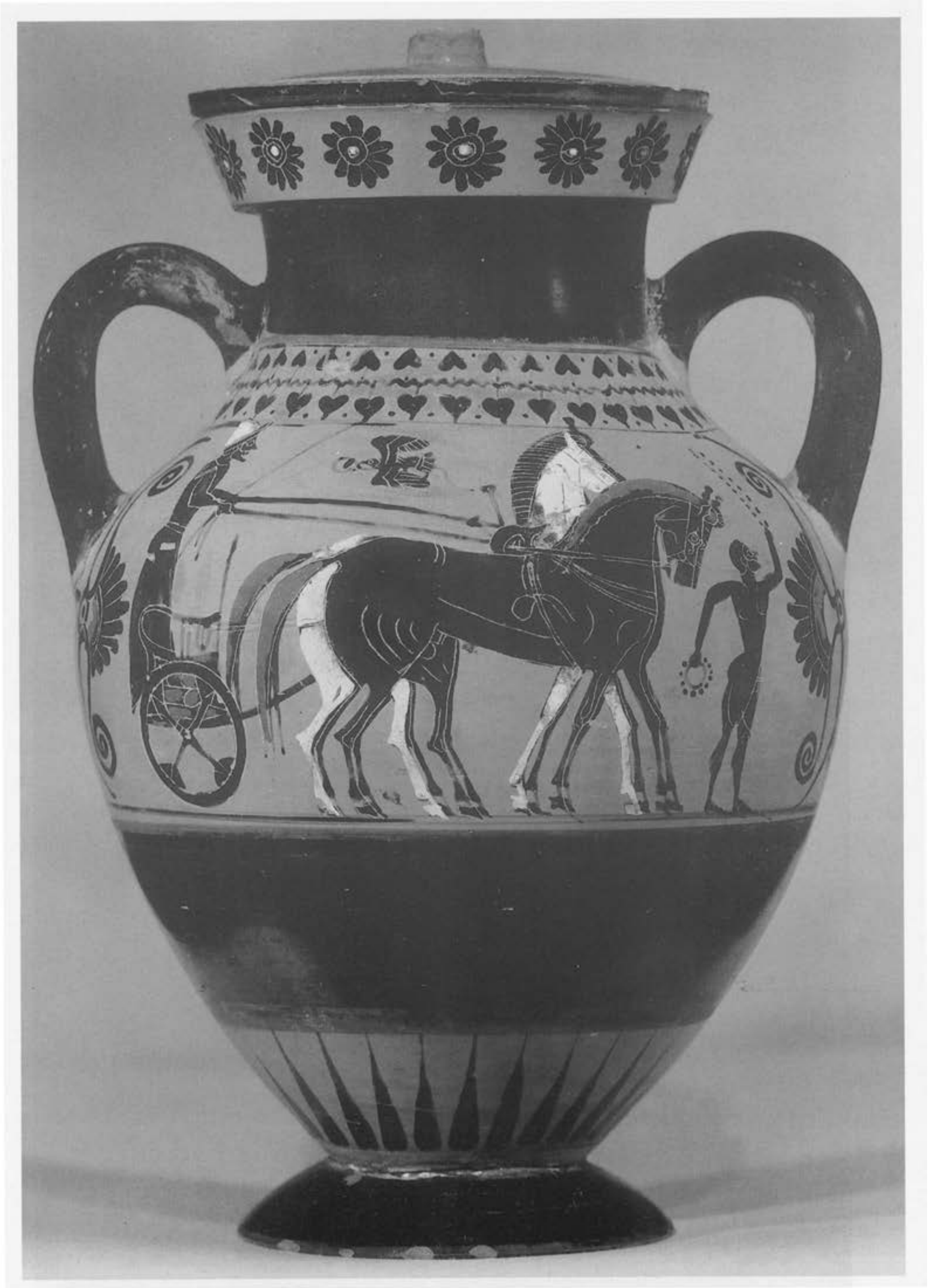

Figure 6. Chariot: New York, Bastis. Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 7. Detail of departure scene: Orvieto, Faina 2747 (77), Exekias. Photograph after W. Technau, *Exekias* (Leipzig, 1936), pl. 8.

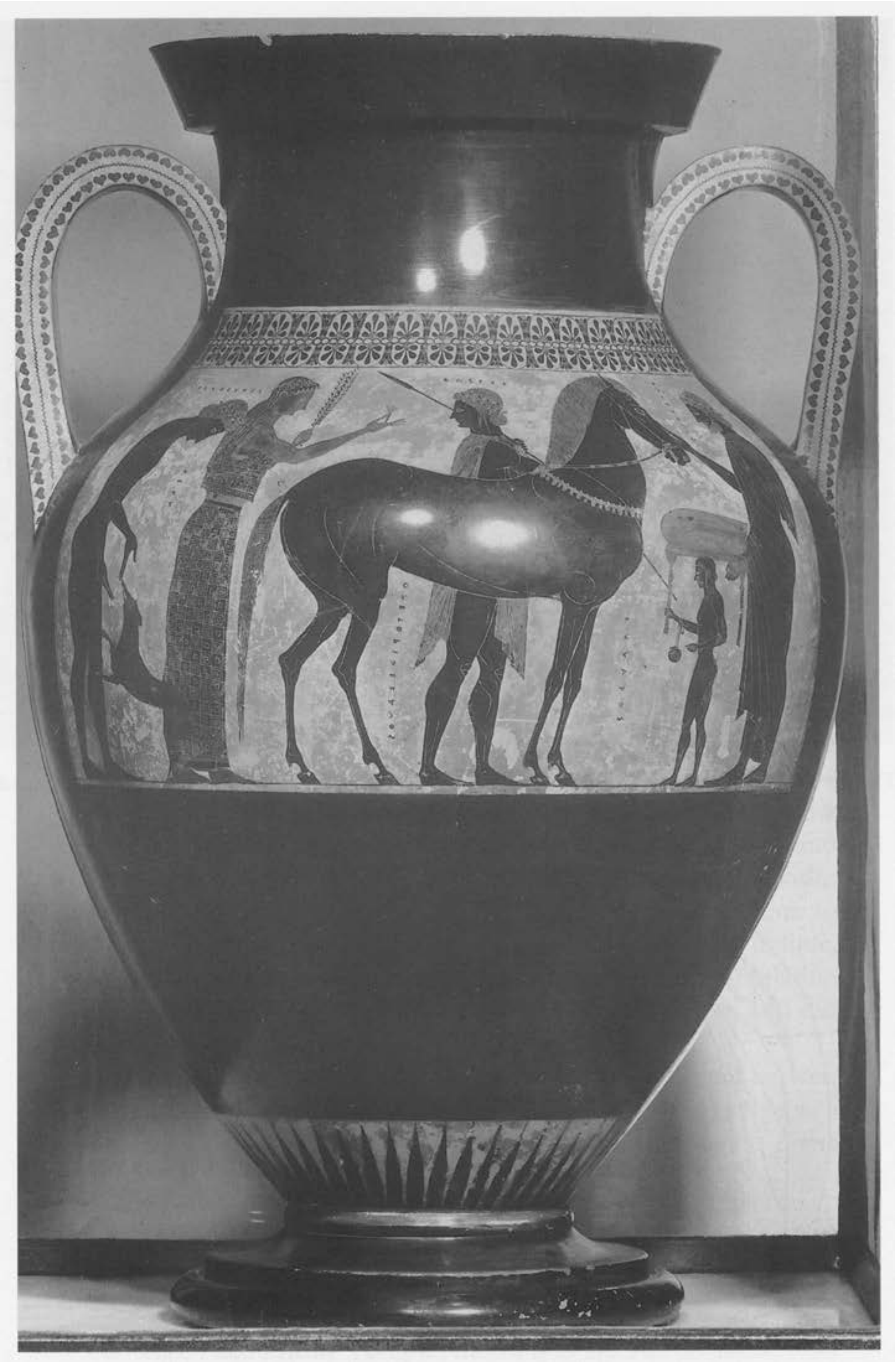

Figure 8. The Dioskouroi *en famille*. Vatican 344, Exekias. Photograph courtesy of the Hirmer Fotoarchiv, Munich.

Figure 9. Youth with horse: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art X.21.26, Manner of the Lysippides Painter. Photograph courtesy of the museum.

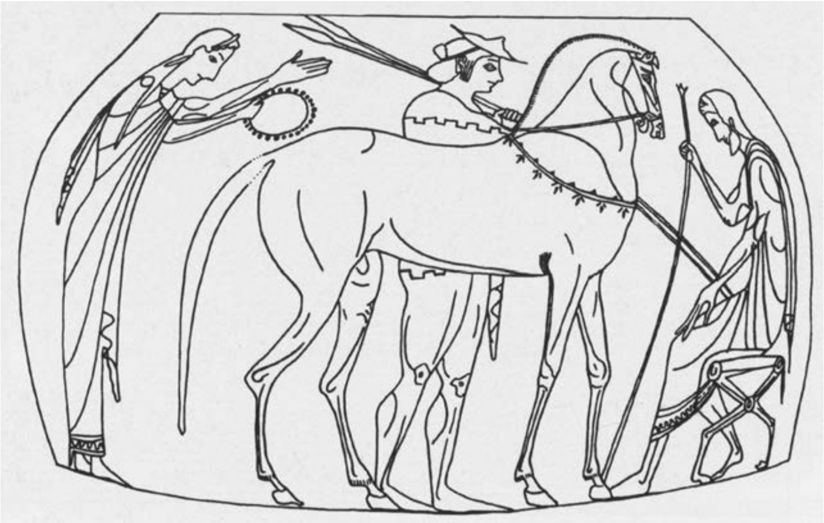

Figure 10. Youth with horse: Rome, Villa Giulia Museum 24998, Lysippides Painter. Drawing (Mackay) after a museum photograph.

CHAPTER FOUR

SELF-CORRECTION, SPONTANEITY, AND ORALITY IN ARCHAIC POETRY

RUTH SCODEL

Until recently, scholars treated orality in archaic poetry mainly as a question of composition, asking whether this or that poet actually used writing. More recently, issues of performance have dominated, as the symposium and the institutional and social background for poetry have become major concerns.[1] There is a lively discussion about whether Pindar's *epinicia* were monodies or choral songs.[2] This debate is fuelled less by interest in the actual performance than by arguments about the identity of the speaker in the Pindaric ode: if the chorus did not sing, the 'I' can never be choral. Nobody, however, doubts the presence of a dancing chorus. The energy scholars have given to this argument, however, concentrates attention on the initial performance and so distracts from other questions about how Pindaric songs were received outside that original context. The recognition that archaic Greek poetry was largely occasional and composed for specific performances, and yet also circulated to wider audiences and survived in written texts, invites further questions: to what extent did the poets and their audience treat poems as unique, repeatable texts? To what extent did poets anticipate the circulation of their works outside the original context of performance, and did they compose with a view to such distant audiences?

Obviously, poetry of different kinds demands a different answer. Pindar is clearly composing for an audience extended in both space and time.[3] I would argue that the difficulty of his language is *prima*

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[1] E. Bowie, 'Early Greek Elegy, Symposium, and Public Festival', *JHS* 106 (1986), 13-35.

[2] On one side: M. Lefkowitz, 'Who Sang Pindar's Victory Odes?', *AJPh* 109 (1988), 1-12 and M. Heath, 'Receiving the κῶμος', *AJPh* 109 (1988), 180-95; on the other, C. Carey, 'The Performance of the Victory Ode', *AJPh* 110 (1989), 545-66.

[3] G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer. The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore, 1990) stresses the Panhellenic claims of Pindaric poetry and its diffusion by means other than writing (107 ff. and 408-9).

facie evidence that he expected individual members of his audience to hear his poems many times (and the same must be true about Aeschylus). Symposiastic poetry is much more difficult. When Rösler asked the question about Alcaeus' expectations of his audience, his method was narrow and his answer probably wrong–that Alcaeus' poetry is directed only at the group of his friends–though Rösler's book points to an important question: how and why does poetry which seems to address itself to a small group of intimate friends become widely popular and indeed survive long after the poet's death?[4] Rösler comments, doubtless truly, that the key must lie in the perceived excellence of the poetry, which caused those who came into contact with it to memorise it, perhaps to copy it, and to reperform it. But he does not really confront the obvious willingness of wider audiences to receive a poetry that is filled with local references and characters, or consider the possibility that the openness of the audience to such poetry implies that it could be composed even by a poet who expected and desired audiences who did not know the people among whom and for whom it was first created.

We have become accustomed to a fairly sophisticated language for thinking about the poetic 'ego'.[5] We also need to consider the connections among various audiences of the kind familiar from narratology: the internal addressees, the implied audience, and the real immediate audience, possible secondary audiences. We might also benefit from a less familiar narratological distinction, that between narrative audiences, who know everything the text seems to presuppose that they know, and authorial audiences, corresponding to the implied author: the perfect imagined real audience. Often modern novelists sharply distinguish these two by speaking as if invented features of a fictional world could be taken for granted.[6] It is worth considering whether an Archilochus or Alcaeus, as his reputation began to spread outside his own circle, might not have continued to address himself only to his friends for generic reasons: one of the particular effects of this poetry for outsiders is precisely the sense of

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[4] W. Rösler, *Dichter und Gruppe. Eine Untersuchung zu den Bedingungen und zur historischen Funktion früher griechischer Lyrik am Beispiel Alkaios* (Munich, 1980).

[5] See S.R. Slings, 'The I in Personal Archaic Lyric', in *The Poet's I in Archaic Greek Lyric. Proceedings of a Symposium held at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam*, ed. S.R. Slings (Amsterdam, 1990), 1-30.

[6] See R. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ithaca, 1987), 94-104 and J. Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* (Chicago, 1989), 29-30.

eavesdropping, of admission to a small, enclosed world.[7] I call this pseudo-intimacy, and if it is possible in monodies whose original performance context was genuinely intimate, it can be very striking in poetry whose claims to a broader audience are explicit.

Pindar, as often, provides the sharpest evidence. Pindaric scholarship tends to concentrate on the immediate context for the poetic performance and not to consider very much how the poetry would accomplish its task of preserving the glory of the the victor forever–how, therefore, it addresses itself to secondary audiences. Yet the *epinicia* are intended, obviously, for reperformance in situations far removed from the original occasions: otherwise they can hardly fulfill their function of preserving the memory of the patron. These poems are fully conscious of secondary audiences; they are supposed to travel, as we all know from the opening of *Nemean* 5.[8] Yet Pindaric poetry, though most of its occasionality is public and accessible–that is, the poem tells us pretty clearly, usually, who the victor was, in what event, and where–is sometimes obscure about matters that would have been familiar to the audience of a first performance. Even when all the necessary information is implicit in the text, it will often require some energetic thought to reconstruct it all. So Pindar's practice can fairly be described as pseudo-intimate: the poet speaks simultaneously in order to make the victor known, and as if the essential facts about him were familiar to all. Other poets may be richer in private allusions, but we should be sceptical about taking them as unequivocal evidence that the poets never considered broader audiences.

Again, although we know from the work of Ruth Finnegan and others that in many cultures performances of oral poetry are carefully prepared,[9] many assume that the Parry-Lord tradition in Homeric studies demands that we believe in pure composition-in-

[7] B. Gentili, *Poetry and its Public in Ancient Greece*, trans. A.T. Cole (Baltimore, 1988), 42-3, suggests that, paradoxically, the allegorical and aphoristic qualities of Alcaeus' poetry, originally intended to be understandable only for his own circle, made it intelligible and relevant in fifth-century Athens.

[8] The reality of reperformance is well stressed by C.J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985), 50: 'There is every reason to suppose not merely that all the archaic and early classical poetry that survived into the Hellenistic age was originally performed orally and before audiences, large or small, but also that most of it was often re-performed subsequent to the first performance.' He is not concerned, however, with whether poems were composed for re-performance.

[9] *Literacy and Orality* (Oxford, 1988), especially 95-109.

performance, and attack or defend on that basis. Reality was almost certainly more complicated. It seems very unlikely that writing, in the archaic period, was an important medium for the transmission and reception of poetry on an everyday basis. It may not have been very central to composition either. But it can hardly fail to have had an effect as a way to stabilise and preserve texts, to protect them from tampering and guarantee them. The various stories about early texts being dedicated in temples–Hesiod and the *Theogony*, the book of Heraclitus–point in this direction. Such protection is important where the text is exoteric, where it circulates freely; Theognis associates his desire to seal his poetry with his fame in the world at large, outside his own city (19-24). I would like to look at one question within this whole complex of issues: the habit of self-correction in archaic poetry and what the rhetorical conventions under which poetry was composed and heard imply about how it was actually composed and heard.

Self-correction presents very different issues, depending on whether it occurs within a single text or between texts. For a speaker apparently to change his mind, stop himself, or announce that he has spoken inappropriately, generally implies an extemporaneous situation, since with preparation the speaker could presumably have gotten it right the first time (there is, of course, the special rhetoric of abandoning a prepared text in favour of spontaneous speech, but that is not at issue here). Pindar, of course, often engages in self-correction of this kind. On the other hand, when a speaker corrects what he has said before, on another occasion, the situation is somewhat different. There is no necessary implication of spontaneity, but there must be a previous relationship with the audience, since they must understand what is being corrected. This type appears in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. It may be revealing that both the other famous examples are problematic: there is no agreement about whether Stesichorus' *Palinode* was a single work which included a dramatic self-correction, or a separate poem from the one which offended Helen, and there is no agreement also about whether *Nemean* 7 should be regarded as a self-correction at all.[10] I would

[10] The latest editor, M. Davies, in *Poetareum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmentu* (Oxford, 1991)–hereafter *PMG*–titles fragments 191-3 ΠΑΛΙΝΩΙΔΙΑΙ. There is a bibliography on the Palinode(s) in E. Degani and G. Buxacchini, *Lirici Greci* (Florence, 1977), 297; more recent articles arguing for two palinodes include F. Martino, 'Un proemio secondo e le due palinodie di Stesichoro', *Belfagor* 35 (1980), 99-107 (*non vidi*) and E. Cingano, 'Quante testimonianze sulle palinodie di Stesichoro?', *QUCC*

suggest that if we believe that Stesichorus' self-correction was a separate work, we could consider a poet's correction of another of his own works as a procedure conventional in itself, and so move to an understanding of *Nemean* 7 which allows us to relate it to the *Paean* without imagining a Pindar who inappropriately drags his private concerns into his commisions. In any case, both types of self-correction pose questions about poetic authority (how does it survive such shifts?) and about the reception of poetry outside its original context.

There have been two excellent recent studies of self-correction in Pindar by Hayden Pelliccia[11] and Andrew Miller.[12] Pelliccia treats specifically the 'false-start recusatio' in which Pindar pretends to be going in a wrong direction in order to have his poetic cake and eat it too; he can include material he simultaneously wants to reject. Miller discusses more generally the convention that the Pindaric performance is extemporaneous, and so the extent to which the poems are dramatic: Pindar imitates someone spontaneously praising the victor. These articles describe the technique very clearly, but only within narrowly defined parameters. Miller self-consciously avoids treating the relationship between the speaker of the poem and the composer. Pelliccia places together Pindar's explicit self-corrections with the 'false-start' of Gorgias' *Helen* and the opening of Herodotus, where there is abandonment of a theme but no open declaration that it was erroneously chosen. Such passages present pseudo-spontaneity in a real but weaker form. Since both Miller and Pelliccia treat pseudo-spontaneity mainly as a way for the individual authors to include material they also want to reject, the distinction between abandonment of a theme and self-correction is not important for them. They are not concerned with the origins of this technique, with what it might suggest about orality in Greek poetry, or with its implications about the attitudes of poet and audience, but only with its function within the rhetoric of the poet.

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41 (1982), 21-33. For bibliography and a summary of the controversy on *Nemean* 7 see C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes Of Pindar* (Salem, NH, 1980), 133-6. The view closest to my own is that of G. Most, *The Measures of Praise: Structure and Function in Pindar's Second Pythian and Seventh Neamean Odes* (*Hypomnemata*: 83) (Göttingen, 1985), 207-10: for those familiar with the Paean, the poem is a defence, but knowledge of the earlier work is not essential, and the revisionism does not violate *Nemean* 7's occasionality.

[11] H. Pelliccia, 'Sappho 16, Gorgias' Helen, and the Preface to Herodotus' Histories', *YCS* 29 (1992), 63-84.

[12] A. Miller, 'Pindaric Mimesis: the Associative Mode', *CJ* 89 (1993), 21-54.

Nor are they concerned with its distribution throughout archaic poetry. In Alcman's *Partheneion*, for instance, the singers interrupt their praise of Agido because they consider Hagesichora, and they interrupt the praise of Hagesichora because it is unnecessary, since the audience can see her (Alcman 1 *PMG*, 39-57). Sappho's *epithalamion* singers misstate why the apple-pickers did not pick the finest apple, and correct themselves. Self-correction, in other words, seems especially prominent in those genres where it is least authentic, since these are obviously compositions taught to the chorus in advance. Still, there is a certain verisimilitude at work here: it is especially appropriate to young girls that their poetic speech is not entirely precise. In epic, Homer's addresses to the Muses are surely a device of pseudo-spontaneity, but he never undercuts his authority by changing his mind either about what he tells or whether he should be telling it. His characters engage in self-correction often, both within soliloquy and in dialogue (as when Helen tells Paris to go fight Menelaus again, and then immediately warns him not to). Hesiod, of course, does, using in his own voice the same break-off device of asking why he is talking about oak or stone that Homer gives to his characters. But Hesiod has also begun the *Theogony* by narrating his own poetic initiation, which includes defining himself as a shepherd, which in the *Works and Days* he does not seem to be. That is, there is an obvious connection between self-correction and the presentation of character. The Homeric narrator generally avoids giving himself a personality, and he certainly does not want to give the impression that he is capable of error.

In genuinely spontaneous speech, self-correction and shifts of direction happen all the time. (Avoiding too much self-correction is an important measure of competence in such everyday oral narration as telling jokes.) Self-correction is the extreme example of pseudo-spontaneity.[13] Pindar, of course, constantly imitates a man who is deciding where his poem shall go, stopping himself from going on too long or treating an inappropriate subject, even though everyone in the audience knew perfectly well that it had already been composed and taught to a chorus, who are dancing if not singing it. Of course, Pindar's *epinicia* make no serious pretence of being genuine spontaneous compositions. Without claiming to have identified

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[13] Carey, 'Performance of the Victory Ode', 5, uses the term 'oral subterfuge' for this phenomenon in Pindar.

every self-correction in archaic and classical literature, I would claim in a rough-and-ready way that self-correction is common in choral lyric, but not in monody. The most spontaneous-seeming Greek poets–Alcaeus, Sappho, and Anacreon–do not correct themselves. The exception is interesting, for Sappho's famous self-correction about the apples is probably from an *epithalamion* (105a *PLF*), that is, from a relatively public genre. This makes excellent sense. The 'I' of personal lyric generates an impression of spontaneity because the poem seems properly carried along by the speaker's thoughts and feelings. The poet's personality as poet, on the other hand, is not especially prominent. Self-correction, whether internal or external, belongs to those forms in which the poet is a figure of authority and demonstrates his anxieties about doing his important job adequately. Sappho's famous priamel is an easy dismissal of the opinions of others; Pindar's are often tortuous selections of theme. Self-correction belongs not only to the presentation of character, but to a particular kind of character: that of the poet in a public role.

Pseudo-spontaneity seems to evoke the Homeric bard, and the evidence is suggestive. In Homer, the poet appears to select a topic according to the need of the moment: at *Odyssey* 8. 73 it is the Muse who incites Demodocus to sing the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus, while at 499 ff. the singer responds to Odysseus' challenge that he sing the Wooden Horse. The second instance certainly claims that the poet can perform spontaneously, which is a special test of his competence. In between, the song of Ares and Aphrodite is accompanied by a dance, and if the dance has any relation to the song, it is almost impossible that it could be extemporaneous, especially since the dancers, unlike Demodocus, are not professionals.[14] So the poet's language does not imply that the song was spontaneous: Demodocus simply begins with a prelude and sings. At the same time, the song does not seem formally different from other epic songs. Spontaneity is not stressed, but its absence is not marked either. So on this evidence we should perhaps imagine a continuum between fully extemporaneous performance, which would be unusual but possible for a skilled singer, and thoroughly rehearsed

[14] J.B. Hainsworth, in *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 1, edd. A. Heubeck, S. West, and J.B. Hainsworth (Oxford, 1988), on 8. 256, stresses that although many scholars have speculated that the first dance mimes the song, the poem does not imply that the song and dance constitute a unified performance, and that other songs accompanied by simultaneous dance belong to ritual, as this does not.

performance. This is just what common sense would suggest, after all. But the evidence also suggests that the poetry itself tends to emphasise its spontaneous side.

Again, we can see obvious reasons for such a tendency. In Homeric epic, the pretence of spontaneity helps harmonise claims to traditional truth with the reality of continual innovation and invention, since the Muse directs each performance. Not only does the epic stress extemporaneous above rehearsed performance, it deliberately obscures the realistic facts of poetic practice and transmission. Demodocus is praised for his ability to sing the Wooden Horse as if he had been there or heard from one who had: the 'as if' is critical (8. 491), for the poet's source is the Muse, or perhaps Apollo, not the accounts of the participants which would actually have provided whatever was not conventional in the poetic tradition about an event. Similarly, Phemius claims to be 'self-taught', and says that a god has 'planted in my mind all kinds of song-roads' (22. 347-9). Unlike many commentators, I would argue that this should be taken literally though unrealistically.[15] Poetic skill and knowledge come from the individual and from the gods, not from other poets. The proem to the Catalogue of Ships opposes the full knowledge of the Muses with the mere *kleos* available to us (*Iliad* 2. 485-6). If each act of poetic memory is new and inspired, we need not worry that fallible poets have interfered with the tradition. The actual transmission of stories is not reliably accurate enough, and the slow process of private creation and practice might seem too open to individual manipulation. So the epic claim to genuine access to the past demands that epic present itself as spontaneous and always newly inspired. The prevalence of pseudo-spontaneity in later choral performance, where true spontaneity is not possible, suggests that even outside epic there is a strong cultural bias in favour of unprepared song, or song which presents itself as unprepared even if it is not, even where originality may be valued.

So a further reason for pseudo-spontaneity may well be occasionality, and the desire of the audience to feel that they are able to effect performance. Svenbro has analysed Phemius' song in *Odyssey*

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[15] So A. Heubeck, in *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 3, edd. J. Russo, M. Fernandez-Galliano, and A. Heubeck, (Oxford, 1992), argues in his excellent note on 22. 347-9 that Phemius claims the ability to apply the traditional repertory appropriately to each audience. See A. Ford, *Homer: the Poetry of the Past* (Ithaca, 1992), 90-2 and 129-30.

1 in these terms.[16] Phemius' subject, the unhappy return of the Achaeans, might be expected to please the suitors. Penelope attempts to intervene and control the song. It is worth noting that the only control over song we see in the epic is for the dissatisfied audience to stop the performance completely and demand a new beginning with a different subject; we do not have direct evidence for the kind of expansion and contraction of narrative elements for which we tend to assume audience response was decisive in composition-in-performance.[17] Homeric audiences do not interfere with the poet's development of theme, but only with the basic appropriateness of the narrative topic to the occasion. On the other hand, the Intermezzo of *Odyssey* 11 does represent an audience that demands the continuation of a narrative the speaker has tried to end. The apparently spontaneous songs of the *Odyssey* prompt audience interference, while the story of Ares and Aphrodite is sung from beginning to end. This is, in one way, ironic, as if the rehearsed song had a better chance of meeting the audience's present desires, but it suggests a connection between extemporaneous performance and audience involvement.

Yet even given this bias, the oral subterfuge is a peculiar device for choral poetry. On the one hand, it is obvious that spontaneity is a fiction, since the poems have been composed in advance; on the other hand, the poets claim wisdom and authority, and self-correction undercuts these as other devices of pseudo-spontaneity, an opening hesitation for instance, do not. In Alcman's *Partheneion*, the way these dramatic conventions work is fairly straightforward: authority belongs to the poet, who imitates the naiveté that is appropriate to young girls. In choral forms in which the chorus is not so fully characterised, the combination of poetic authority and self-correcting speaker is tricky. For the two to co-exist requires a recognisable gap between the implied author and the speaker, where the speaker of the poem is, in effect, an internal narrator. Pindar can take on the pose of someone who goes on too long with a subject or begins an impious story because his audience will know that it is not really *Pindar* who has made these mistakes. But if these conventions

[16] J. Svenbro, *La Pierre et le Marbre: Aux Origines de la Poétique Grecque* (Lund, 1976), 18-21.

[17] W.F. Wyatt, 'The Intermezzo of Odyssey 11 and the Poets Homer and Odysseus', *SMEA* 1989, 235-53, argues that Odysseus functions as a bard in the Apologos and that the Intermezzo thus represents an occasion on which the audience demands a longer song.

depend on the audience's awareness that they are fictions, what is their point, and how do they work?

Miller argues that Pindar imitates an extemporaneous speaker. But what exactly could the audience imagine is being enacted, and does this change when the song is performed or read outside the original context? In modern lyric, the poem characteristically pretends to be a faithful record of the poet's thoughts and feelings at the time of composition, which the reader shares at the moment of reading; in archaic Greek poetry, the convention seems to pretend that composition is still in progress at the moment of performance. We can look at the convention backwards through the orators, who may also pretend to be in doubt what to say, or even to be reacting to an audience whose responses they have actually predicted and written into the script. In the assembly or court, there was presumably at least the possibility of real spontaneous speech. In the poetic performance of Pindar or Simonides, the convention of spontaneity coexists with the opposite rule that permits allusion to the actual facts governing composition and performance: commission, payment, and intermediaries. This invites us to think of the convention differently, and complicates it. On the one hand, an audience presented with a performance set in the here-and-now is presumably likely to refer what they hear to the here-and-now: it may have been just as easy to imagine that the performers could change their text in the midst of performance as it is to accept that what one hears is actually the representation of a sets of thoughts in the poet's mind some days ago, or rather, the easiest response is probably not to consider the matter. The immediacy of performance and the familiarity of the rules allowed the distinction to be blurred in favour of the here-and-now, perhaps; if pressed, the archaic audience might have said that the poet was pretending to have made the mistake in the process of composing the poem, but while actually hearing the song, they were under no pressure to worry about such divisions of time or responsibility, and probably would not be tempted to ask why, if the formulation was obviously inadequate, the poet did not begin again instead of recording the process.

When we read Pindar or Simonides, on the other hand, and indeed when we read the orators, we tend, I think, to drift into reading them more or less as we read Wordsworth: we consciously treat them as narrative/dramatic. At the same time, even as we are aware (having all been schooled by New Critics) that the poetic 'I' is not the poet, we also assume that the poetic speaker is somehow

authentic, that the poet crafts the discourse around thoughts and feelings that have their origins in his or her real experiences. Sometimes, in reading ancient choral lyric, we use the text as a script with which we reconstruct an original performance, but often most of us, surely, drift into reading the poem as a drama of the poet's inner experience. When Pindar at the beginning of *Olympian* 10 tells the Muse and Truth to read him the name of the son of Archestratus from the notice written in his mind, we hear a Pindar speaking at the moment he composed the poem, while in allusions to the original ritual contexts, we mentally construct the necessary actions. Are we reading very differently from the ancient audience?

In the ideal spontaneous epic performance, the Muse enables the poet to negotiate the treacherous passage between tradition and the occasion. For encomiastic poets, the problem of truth changes. The main issue is not fidelity to the already-known, for the poet can take a directly antagonistic stand towards mythical tradition if he so desires, but personal sincerity. The business of praising living men is itself difficult and morally ambiguous; praising for money is even more complicated. The 'oral subterfuge' allows the poet to assume an almost romantic persona, one who is prone to say whatever comes into his mind. Like us, Greeks associated spontaneous speech with sincerity and rhetorical preparation with manipulativeness.

The beginning of the Scopas fragment of Simonides (542 *PMG*) still looks like a problem to some people, because the 'speaker' (I use Andrew Miller's neutral term here) begins by quoting Pittacus with approval ('it is hard to be good') and then, a few lines later, denies precisely this, claiming that it is not hard, but impossible:

ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι
χαλεπὸν χερσίν τε καὶ ποσσὶ καὶ νόωι
    τετράγονον ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον·
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οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον
νέμεται, καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰ-
ρημένον χαλεπὸν φατ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.

> θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ
> ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι
> ὃν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ καθέληι.
> It is hard to be a truly good man, in hands and feet and mind made foursquare, without cause for blame . . . But the saying of Pittacus, though spoken by a wise man, does not seem to me said 'in tune'. He says it is hard to be good. Only a god could have this honour, but it is not possible for a man not to be bad, if a misfortune that cannot be controlled seizes him.

Plato has successfully prejudiced many scholars against the idea that the poet has changed his mind. Yet the procedure is quite obvious, once we abandon this prejudice. Simonides follows his quotation of Pittacus by an expansion of the single word 'truly': the 'truly' good man must be foursquare and flawless. The more he thinks about what is implied by 'truly good', the closer the thought comes that Pittacus understated the case. So finally the thinker accepts this; only the gods can be perfect. Wilamowitz came close to understanding the beginning of the poem this way: 'kommt dem Redenden zum Bewußtsein, daß er den Spruch gar nicht passend als einen für sich verbindlich citiert hat', he says of the correction of Pittacus.[18] The idea that only the gods can be perfect is always appropriate in an encomiastic context; it makes way for praising an inevitably imperfect human being.[19] The poem either implies praise of Scopas, as the person described near the poem's end, or justifies such praise elsewhere. Now obviously Simonides is not really thinking in this passage–as Wilamowitz again saw, the movement of thought is obviously planned from the start. So why does a poet imitate a man thinking? The answer is obvious: Simonides does this because his conclusion is far more convincing that it would be if he stated it baldly. We follow him in his journey from acceptance of Pittacus' saying to rejection of it; we act it out with him. This method of attracting audience sympathy is still common even among scholars; many a book or lecture narrates the process of discovery in the hope that by sharing the experience we will be inclined to share the conclusion. But the modern scholar does not pretend to be achieving

[18] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin, 1913), 165-7.
[19] See M. Dickie, 'The Argument and Form of Simonides 542 *PMG*', *HSCPh* 82 (1978), 21-33.

insight at the podium. We may narrate how we went down blind alleys, but we do not enact error.

This text does not differ much for its original audiences and for secondary ones, except that the original context may have sharpened the point by providing an occasion on which a mortal was to be praised. On the other hand, it works rather differently for those who hear it for the first time and those who are hearing it again (and this is, of course, a text we know was widely memorised; all those present in Plato's *Protagoras* are familiar with it). On a first hearing, the 'truly' is innocent. The hearer has no reason to expect that it will represent a significant modification of the formula, and its expansion is therefore a mild surprise; instead the opening *men* creates an expectation that someone will be contrasted with the 'good man'. When the sense does not break after *chalepon*, the hearer must make a slight adjustment. Someone who is already familiar with the course of the argument, though, should feel the intrusive 'truly' as an immediate invitation to begin thinking about what would be implied by being 'truly *agathos*', and the meditation should be even more convincing.

Glenn Most has argued that the key to the poem lies in the ambiguity of the word *chalepon*, which, he argues, means not 'hard' but 'impossible' in the opening sentence.[20] Indeed, in many passages the word is used for actions that are impossible because they would transgress mortal limits. So, for instance, Meriones says at *Iliad* 16. 620 that it is *chalepon* for Aeneas to kill every warrior who confronts him, since he is mortal. Yet nobody who hears Simonides' poem for the first time can understand it this way, because the sense 'impossible' for *chalepon* is always a deliberate understatement, usually heavily ironic, and nothing in the context could tell the reader to understand the word this way at the very start. Indeed, the familiarity of Pittacus' saying would make it *chalepon* to perceive Simonides' opening as anything but an expansion of the proverb. Yet the reader who knows that the correction of Pittacus is to come and recognises the definition of 'good' as making it equivalent to 'perfect' can also feel the ironic sense of *chalepon* from the start. This wit is a reward of rereading.

[20] G.W. Most, 'Simonides' Ode to Scopas in Contexts', in *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature*, edd. I.F. de Jong and J.P. Sullivan (Leiden, 1994), 127-52; examples include *Odyssey* 10. 305; 23. 281, 184; H. Dem. 11; Pindar, *Nemean* 10. 72; Bacchylides 5. 94; Solon 16. 1 West; and Theognis 1075. The point about the sense of *chalepon* was made by P.E. Easterling, 'Alcman 58 and Simonides 37', *PCPhS* 200 (1974), 37-43.

I want to look at one of the most famous extra-textual self-corrections in archaic poetry, line 11 of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, which has a peculiarity I do not think has been noticed. Hesiod has just announced his intention of speaking the truth to Perses; he then suddenly begins to meditate on the two goddesses who are called Eris. Now this meditation, as we all know, is introduced by the revelation that there are, in fact, two goddesses (11-26):

Οὐκ ἄρα μοῦνον ἔην 'Ερίδων γένος, ἀλλ' ἐπι γαῖαν.
εἰσὶ δύω · τὴν μέν κεν ἐπαίνησειε νοήσας.
ἡ δ' ἐπιμωμητή · διὰ δ' ἄνδιχα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν.
ἡ μὲν γὰρ πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ καὶ δῆριν ὀφέλλει,
σχετλίη · οὔ τις τήν γε φιλεῖ βρότος, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἀνάγκης
ἀθανάτων βουλῇσιν Ἔρις τιμῶσι βαρεῖαν.
τὴν δ' ἑτέρην προτέρην μὲν ἐγείνατο Νὺξ ἐρεβεννή,
θῆκε δέ μιν Κρονίδης ὑψιζύγος αἰθέρα ναίων
γαίης δ' ἐν ῥίφησι καὶ ἀνδράσι πολλὸν ἀμείνω ·
ἥ τε καὶ ἀπάλαμόν περ ὅμως ἐπὶ ἔργον ἔγειρεν.
εἰς ἕτερον γάρ τις ἰδὼν ἔργοιο χατίζων
πλούσιον, ὃς σπεύδει μὲν ἀρώμεναι ἠδὲ φυτεύειν
οἶκόν τ' εὖ θέσθαι, ζηλοῖ δέ τε γείτονι γείτων
εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ': ἀγαθὴ δ' Ἔρις ἥδε βροτοῖσιν.
καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων,
καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῷ.

So it turns out that Strife is not a single being, but there are two upon the Earth. A person who notices one would praise it, while the other is blameworthy. They have quite different minds. For one increases cruel war and contention, cruel. No mortal loves her, but by the will of the immortals they honour heavy Strife, through necessity. But the other one dark Night bore first, and the high-throned son of Cronus who lives in the aether settled her in the roots of the earth, and made her much better for men. She rouses even the shiftless man to work. For one who doesn't work, seeing another man who is rich,[21] who moves quickly to plough and sow and put his house in order, neighbour envies his neighbour who moves quickly towards wealth. This Strife is good for mortals. And potter is angry with potter, and carpenter with carpenter, and beggar resents beggar, and bard, bard.

[21] Text and syntax here are difficult; I am following West's text and basic interpretation.

Hesiod uses the particle *ara* with the imperfect 'of a truth just realised': he used to think there was only one origin and thus one kind of Eris, but he has come to a better knowledge. It is generally thought that Hesiod here refers back to his own *Theogony*, where only a single Eris was born of night. The self-correction seems to presuppose familiarity with the *Theogony*, though such familiarity is not quite essential. If most people would assume that Eris was a single goddess, and most probably would–Homer, after all, presents her too, and she has a celebrated part in the early stages of the Trojan story–Hesiod could be correcting not an earlier song, but the popular opinion he had previously shared. So the self-correction can only be fully recognised as such by audiences who have particular knowledge, but those who do not know the other poem need not be excessively perplexed. But I would like to look at another aspect of this self-correction, namely that it implies a narrative. A speaker who only now realises that his previous belief is false, or that his earlier perception of the world was incomplete, thereby implies that some experience, or at least further significant thought, has intervened. When self-correction appears in a continuous line of thought, the dramatic pretence forms the narrative. When characters in a narrative correct their earlier opinions, the audience uses the narrative to explain their changes of mind if these are not clear. When Achilles says at *Iliad* 9. 361 that it turns out that there is no *charis*, the narrative provides the context: we understand that Achilles is saying that Agamemnon's behaviour has forced him to revise his earlier assumption that appropriate *charis* was always given. When Odysseus tells Eurymachus that it turns out that there is no sense corresponding to his good looks, Eurymachus' immediately preceding behaviour motivates the remark.

Consider the most famous self-correction in archaic poetry, the palinode(s) of Stesichorus. Whether this was one poem or two, it demonstrates the profound need for a narrative explanation of such a change of mind. Because the change was radical–from the traditional story blaming Helen to another, perhaps new story, exonerating her–the narrative had to be equally powerful. Hence the story familiar from Plato (*Phaedrus* 243a), whether based on anything in the palinode or not, that Stesichorus had been blinded by the divine Helen and composed his new version to placate her, whereupon he was healed. Without a story or a representation of the mental process leading to the correction, self-correction is inexplicable. Or

consider Pindar's *Nemean* 7, where modern scholars differ over whether a self-correction is to be found at all. Again, the scholia offer us an outside narrative because the inner one is obscure. Poets may not always explain their changes, but the audience will desire an explanation, and ancient audiences did. The interpreter must always ask why, if the poet has genuinely left such a gap, he could possibly have have sought it. If Pindar is engaging in self-correction in *Nemean* 7, is he assuming that his narrative in *Paean* 6 will be known to all hearers of *Nemean* 7, or is he ignoring the wider audience in favour of an immediate one (as I would argue monody and iambus often do, because the wider audience will accept this)? Hesiod's self-correction presents a similar problem, since it does not provide a hint of what has made him realise that the good Eris exists, but it is an easier one to tackle, since it is explicit in the poem that Hesiod is correcting an earlier false belief of his own, and there is general agreement that this false belief was expressed in the *Theogony* as the genealogy of Eris. On the other hand, the consideration of the two kinds of Eris is completely unlike the casual-seeming internal self-correction of Simonides or of most examples in Pindar. It does not arise 'naturally' from its context. On the contrary, it is introduced abruptly and seems to arise from nowhere. Certainly nothing in the proem prepares for it.

The absence of narrative may be to some extent mitigated by his description of the activities of the good Eris. If we do not learn what has led Hesiod to this perception, as least we know in some detail what he has perceived. After the passage ends, it is, barely, possible to make sense of it. Perses is exhorted to avoid the bad Eris and not allow her to keep him from work; since the good Eris is associated with the desire to work, it is implicit that in abandoning the bad Eris he will follow the good. We could perhaps consider that Hesiod's thinking is simply so bipolar that in considering the bad Eris, which has led Perses to sue him instead of working, he has imagined a good Eris also. But I find it hard to believe that he would have been moved to correct his *Theogony* solely by this tendency to think in parallel pairs.

And, of course, there is an experience narrated in the poem which provides a perfect occasion for Hesiod to have recognised the positive Eris: his victory in the funeral games of Amphidamus, which he mentions at 656-9. His summary of the results of good Eris points clearly in this direction, in his remark that beggar begrudges

beggar and singer, singer. The good Eris acts within the trades as a generator of professional rivalry, and Hesiod's victory in the competition belongs very precisely to her sphere.

This is not, of course, an original observation. Richard Hamilton has recently argued that the poem is generally structured around a first part devoted to bad Eris, set in the court and occupied with justice, and a second devoted to good Eris, set on the farm, and he emphasises Hesiod's poetic victory as an example of good Eris.[22] But I think he rather understates the difficulty for the listener in using such a structure as a guide to experiencing the poem. For the passage on the Erides does not itself really invite us to expect that the good Eris will have her turn after the world of bad Eris has adequately been explored. One might suggest that the hearer accustomed to the technique of branching in narrative poetry could adapt it here. In Homeric narrative, after all, scenes often end with the announcement that two characters are to do different things, and the narrative continues with the actions of one until the narrative line reaches a plausible temporary closure, and then goes to the second. In *Iliad* 14 Iris is to remove Poseidon from battle and Apollo is to heal and encourage Hector. We follow Iris until Poseidon leaves then we turn to Apollo.[23] But such branching is always explicitly announced, whereas Hesiod does not tell his audience that he will now explore bad Eris: how could an audience recognise that the good Eris would return? Or is such guidance unnecessary?

If we consider that the good Eris, as a self-correction, implies a narrative, the audience will be waiting to hear about how Hesiod learned about her. Anyone already familiar with the *Theogony* already has a minimal biographical framework in which to set the question: Hesiod, the poet initiated by the Muses on Helicon, believed in only one Eris, a child of Night, when he composed the earlier poem, but now he has changed his mind. If the allusion is recognised, the present poem immediately defines itself as continuation of the earlier work in a strikingly 'literary' way. The truly original audience familiar not only with the *Theogony*, but with Hesiod himself, would also not actually need the explanation. If Hesiod sang the poem first at Ascra, among people who knew him, they would surely know about his success; and if those who speculate that

22 *The Architecture of Hesiodic Poetry* (Baltimore and London, 1989), 53-66.

23 T. Krischer, *Formale Konventionen der homerischen Epik* (*Zetemata*: 56) (Munich, 1971), 103-30.

the *Theogony* was the poem with which Hesiod was victorious are correct, which does seem likely, the reference back to it would in itself provide a hint. After all, he dedicated the tripod at Helicon and so made his victory public in his own country. For such an audience, Hesiod's failure to explain how he came to understand good Eris may be a mild joke. The moment he referred to singer's envy of singer they would recognise an allusion to the contest, and would be amused, perhaps, that the singer so praises the principle which has allowed him to come out ahead: would he be celebrating the merits of good Eris if he had lost? The example need not be humour at the poet's own expense, though, or not only that. Contests show exceptionally clearly how rivalry serves the pursuit of excellence. None of the other cases is as sharp. Farming for Hesiod is competitive only at one remove, as the manifestation of an underlying competition for wealth. So the audience which makes the biographical connection also has an advantage in thematic understanding.

At the same time, we cannot assume that Hesiod intends his poem only for such an audience. Even apart from the biographical information about the victory, the *Theogony* does not look like a poem composed for a purely local audience; on the contrary, it seems to seek quite deliberately to give wider fame and authority to some local cults–Hecate, the Heliconian Muses–by locating them within a panhellenic vision. The use of the poet's name within the poem suggests a desire to sign the work; a signature is not necessary if the poet does not imagine any performance except among his acquaintance.[24] And the victory established Hesiod as a singer who could win respect in competition with poets from other places, before an audience of strangers. And, of course, the poem is extant, which means that it was transmitted from its composer to somebody else, probably voluntarily and intentionally: it is surely too long to have been memorised casually. For my purpose here it does not matter whether that transmission involved writing or not. It certainly involved the assumption of an audience who might hear the poem in the absence of its creator, and an audience who did not know

[24] West on 22 denies that naming is a *sphragis*: 'this cannot have been thought necessary at a time when there was no general circulation of written books'. I do not see the logic here, since a poem intended to circulate orally might equally be attached to a name; the issue is whether the poem was imagined to have any circulation without the physical presence of the author. A *sphragis* requires writing only when individual parts of the work sealed are expected to circulate by themselves (like the elegies of Theognis), so that the name would not be attached except in the written book.

Hesiod himself, although Hesiod might have assumed that anyone who heard the second poem would already know the already-famous first one.

This seems to me interesting in several directions. First, the poem would be differently received by its immediate and its wider audience, even though it was probably not composed exclusively for the immediate audience. It is hard to imagine that Hesiod composed the *Works and Days* with a view only to his own neighbours, since it goes out of its way to mention the poet's victory in a competition which demonstrated his ability to please such an audience. In fact, it may be pretending that no wider audience exists, engaging in pseudo-intimacy.

Hesiod shows both similarities and differences to other poets who use this device. Sappho is the greatest master of pseudo-intimacy in Greek. If we know from one fragment that she does look towards enduring fame, and therefore to a future audience for her poetry (55), her poems often give an extraordinarily successful impression of having been composed only for herself and her friends. And sometimes she manipulates this very impression. In Sappho 1, we eavesdrop on her address to Aphrodite through the eavesdroppers of the original audience, as it were: once it strikes us that we never hear the name of the beloved, it can hardly fail to occur to us that the original audience would have known it; avoiding it may seem to be an in-joke. Yet on second thought we have to realise that the name is completely unnecessary in this poem, whose point lies in the ongoing succession of objects of desire for Sappho. Since they are interchangeable, it does not matter which one is in question here.

Lyric poetry, both choral and monodic, public and intimate, often works on its exoteric audience by inviting its members to try to share an original event. In the terms of contemporary narrative theory, one could say that the narrative audience of Pindar's and Sappho's poetry knows in detail facts which the secondary authorial audience must reconstruct from the poetry, and that it is sometimes deliberately made difficult or even impossible for them to do so completely. There is a gap between the essential facts which can be reconstructed and particular details which cannot.

For poetic purposes, Hesiod tells us everything we need to know about the quarrel with Perses. Whatever else the original audience knew would probably only have interfered with the reception of the poem (Perses, after all, may have had a valid case). As far as Hesiod's self-correction is concerned, the *Works and Days* plays with

its audience in a way that is quite different from most other examples of pseudo-intimacy, since Hesiod does ultimately tell the story of his victory. Special privilege is first active, in that the secondary audience is confronted with a riddle that would have been transparent to insiders, but then it is cancelled. The secondary audience, though, can only appreciate the answer to the riddle by contemplating the poem as a whole, or by hearing it again. In the experience of first performance, it is unlikely that anyone would still be wondering about the self-correction so much later in the poem. The narrative of Hesiod's victory is embedded as an apparent digression within a digression. Seafaring is itself a topic set apart from the main argument. Within this section, Hesiod refers to the victory only by way of expansion on the only occasion on which he travelled by sea, and this trip from Aulis to Euboea is in turn a foil for Hesiod's poetic gifts, which compensate for his lack of practical experience. The intelligent auditor would doubtless appreciate the irony that the poet's one tiny voyage can, through the poetic victory, prove his competence to sing on a subject he otherwise does not know, but at this point nobody is likely to refer back to Hesiod's change of mind about Eris at the beginning of the poem.[25] Nor does it seem to be likely that many of those who heard the poem for the first time would think very long about this issue while reflecting on the poem later, given the richness of the poem as a whole. On hearing the poem a second time, though, an auditor who had never heard of Hesiod outside his poem could apply the information about Hesiod's victory as easily as Hesiod's acquaintances could, without even thinking about it. And this opens at least the possibility that Hesiod's failure to explain how he came to change his mind is a deliberate narrative tease for the benefit of such an audience. An immediate narrative of how Hesiod demonstrated the value of Eris by winning a victory might transgress the social limits on self-praise (whereas in its present context the self-praise is demanded by the need to defend the poet's authority to give advice without having personal experience). But it would also destroy the possibility of

[25] Recently there has been a surge of interest in the possible programmatic suggestions of the contrast between Hesiod's voyage from Aulis and his allusion to the departure of the Achaeans from the same place. W. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Poetry* (Baltimore and London, 1984), 152-3, suggests that Hesiod implicitly compares himself to the epic hero; R. Rosen, 'Poetry and Sailing in Hesiod's *Works and Days*', *Class. Antiq.* 9 (1990), 99-133, argues that it is programmatic for Hesiod's non-heroic poetry.

pseudo-intimacy by making the biographical information an admitted necessity. With the actual arrangement, the outsider who hears the poem again can feel like an insider; and the poem can thus manipulate audience response while appearing to proceed entirely by a spontaneous and thus authentic process of thought.

CHAPTER FIVE

LITERARY AWARENESS IN EURIPIDES AND HIS AUDIENCE

C.W. MARSHALL

Even though written records provide the twentieth century with by far the largest part of its information about the fifth-century dramatists, everything about the plays seems to have been in the first instance oral. The plays were composed for public performance, but there was also a significant literary component to them. It is precisely this which I wish to investigate, and in so doing provide a new approach to an old problem.

I have chosen to examine Euripides in particular for a number of reasons. First, since antiquity, Euripides has had a reputation for 'bookishness':[1] that is, being overly aware of the literary environment in which he writes and incorporating this awareness into his works. Second, the later Euripidean plays (which constitute the bulk of the extant *corpus*) acknowledge many sources that are identifiable today, in particular Aeschylus and his plays of 458, the *Oresteia.*[2] Because the sources are identifiable by us, we are in a better position to determine what it is that Euripides is doing with his predecessors than we are, for example, in Aeschylus' relationship with Stesichorus, since Stesichorus' *Oresteia* is so fragmentary. Using Aristophanes' paratragic passages would have been equally possible, but, in that case, dramatic motivation for the imitation is much easier to find, as several studies have shown.[3] The adaptation of other literary

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[1] Aristophanes, *Frogs* 943, 1409, and Athenaeus 1. 4, 3a.

[2] Indebtedness to Aeschylus has long been recognised: F.I. Zeitlin, 'The Closet of Masks: Role-Playing and Myth-Making in the *Orestes* of Euripides', *Ramus* 9 (1980), 51-77 discusses *Orestes*; R. Caldwell, 'Tragedy Romanticized: The *Iphigeneia Taurica*', *CJ* 70 (1974), 23-40 discusses *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*; William G. Thalmann, 'Euripides and Aeschylus: The Case of the *Hekabe*', *Class. Antiq.* 12 (1993), 126-59 discusses *Hecuba*; etc.

[3] For example, F.I. Zeitlin, 'Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*', in *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Helene P. Foley (New York, 1981), 169-217.

texts–what I shall call 'parody'–is more problematic within the single genre of tragedy.

The accusation of bookishness presents a picture of Euripides, composing his plays with copies of Aeschylus, Homer, and whatever else open in front of him at the time. The truth of this picture is ultimately unimportant.[4] Allusions to other literary works are meant to be understood by an audience, who will not have a reference library available to them at a performance: how Euripides expected his audience to be familiar with his source texts becomes the relevant question.

So how was Aeschylus known in the late fifth century by the audience? (I should perhaps add that Wolfgang Iser's distinctions of intended, implied or ideal audiences break down when Greek theatre is considered. Plays were intended for single performance in competition; the original performance is therefore the privileged text, and the audience at that performance must remain the only audience to be considered, subsuming any other categories imaginable.) To this question, scholars have occasionally given answers, usually clustering around two principal positions. Wilamowitz and Webster emphasise both the single performance and the wide reading public, suggesting that plays were known to the public exclusively through reading. If true, this view provides valuable insights about fifth-century literacy, but it devalues the centrality of the festival to Attic life, and ignores the oral component of the culture (emphasised recently by Thomas). Taplin and Erp Taalman Kip go too far in the other direction, denying wide reading of any plays in Athens at the end of the century. That *Frogs* exists shows the unlikelihood of this position. The truth is a rocky middle ground between the two, where it is legitimate to say that in certain circumstances both views are true.[5]

The case is interesting in the chronology involved: Aeschylus died in 456 and Euripides began competing in 455, so the two just missed being competing contemporaries. Transtextual[6] reference to

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[4] It is questioned, for example, by Eric A. Havelock, 'The Oral Composition of Greek Drama', *QUCC* 35 (1980), 61-113, at 86-7.

[5] Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Euripides. Herakles.* Erster Band: *Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie* (Darmstadt, 1969), 124; T.B.L. Webster, *An Introduction to Sophocles*^{2} (Oxford, 1969), 101; Rosalind Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989); Oliver Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford, 1977), 15-16; and A. Maria van Erp Taalman Kip, *Reader and Spectator* (Amsterdam, 1990), 18.

[6] I use the word 'transtextual' to include all types of literary borrowing, while

the *Oresteia* appears to increase towards the end of Euripides' career, though, beginning in the extant works with *Hecuba* c.424, and continuing to *Orestes* and *Cyclops* in 408 (a full fifty years after the production of the work parodied). Clearly this represents a significantly different situation from Aristophanes' parody of Euripides' *Helen* and *Andromeda*, plays produced in 412, in *Women at the Thesmophoria* of 411.[7]

Excluding the seventy-year-olds who remember the original production (for they are not the bulk of the audience), there are five ways that the audience could know the text of the *Oresteia*. Two of these can be immediately discounted: (1) Anecdote–accounts of the impact of the original production (which seems to be considerable in the case of the *Oresteia*)–would not provide sufficient detail for the precision of the transtextual references Euripides makes to Aeschylus, and (2) nor is it the myth in general from which Euripides is deviating: the studies of Thalmann, Zeitlin, etc., show that it is Aeschylus' presentation of the *Oresteia*, in particular, that is being parodied.

This leaves three possibilities by which a late fifth-century audience could know Aeschylus: (3) through seeing his plays reperformed, (4) from having read texts as available through the book trade or libraries, or (5) from having been taught them as schoolchildren. By reperformance (3), I am referring to the unconfirmed but likely possibility that after his death, by special permission, individuals could restage Aeschylus' plays in competition at the City Dionysia.[8] Newiger suggests that such a reperformance took place sometime before the second edition of Aristophanes' *Clouds* in 418. Hutchinson emphatically denies any Aeschylean reperformance before 386, but does so in face of much evidence which is not easily dismissed. It is also possible that regional performances took place,

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staying free of assumptions involving words like 'intertextuality' as used generically in so much postmodern critical theory. Significantly different meanings for the term are found in Kristeva, Todorov, Lachmann, Riffaterre, and Genette (to name but a few), all of which are theoretically more complex than the model of communication mechanisms presented in this chapter.

[7] W. Geoffrey Arnott, 'Euripides' Newfangled *Helen*', *Antichthon* 24 (1990), 1-18; Zeitlin, 'Travesties', 186-9.

[8] Referred to in the anonymous Aeschylean *Life* 12; cf. A.W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*[2] rev. John Gould and D.M. Lewis (Oxford, 1988), 86 and n. 1. It is often assumed that Aeschylus' son Euphorion took advantage of this grant in 431, because his plays defeated Euripides' offerings for that year, which included *Medea*.

but these could not be expected by Euripides to have been seen by the majority of his audience, and therefore are not within the purview of this chapter. The extent of literacy in the fifth-century (4) is of course controversial too: '[b]ooks were still very rare in the mid-fifth century' writes Thomas, but '[b]ooks may have been associated in particular with the education of the sophists' and clearly had an increased presence in Athens in the last quarter of the century, as jokes about Euripides in *Acharnians* and *Frogs* of Aristophanes, and of literacy in general in *Birds*, also demonstrate. Finally (5), Hutchinson has suggested that certain passages of Aeschylus–and here the extant plays are likely candidates by nature of their survival–were being taught in school in the late fifth century.[9]

For Euripides to capitalise on any of these means of the audience knowing Aeschylus, he has to insert clues into his text that are specific enough so as to recall the specific scene of the specific play that is being parodied. These triggers must identify a specific transtextual referent, and not merely an Aeschylean 'feel'. Parody requires the source to be identifiable. In essence, the Euripidean scene must have a built-in footnote to its Aeschylean antecedent. Such a footnote consists of triggers that connect the immediate scene with its imitated predecessor; to use I.A. Richards' terms for discussing metaphor,[10] the trigger is the 'ground' that connects the 'vehicle' (or source) with the 'tenor'. For this reason, '[t]he most parodied [works] are, not surprisingly, the most familiar ones'.[11]

A consequence of the identification criterion is that an awful lot of parodies are not going to be identifiable today, since we lack access the vehicle. This is lamentable, but there is nothing that can

[9] H.-J. Newiger, 'Elektra in Aristophanes' Wolken', *Hermes* 89 (1961), 422-30; G.O. Hutchinson, *Aeschylus: Septem contra Thebas* (Oxford, 1985), xli-xlii. The first citation from Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, is from p. 31; the second is from pp. 19-20 (and see 20 n. 17, which cites L. Woodbury, 'Aristophanes' *Frogs* and Athenian Literacy: *Ran.* 52-53, 1114', *TAPhA* 106 [1976], 349-57, at 351-2, and E.G. Turner, *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries* [London, 1952]; and see also the second edition [1977] with addenda). For indications of Athenian literacy in Old Comedy see N. Slater, chapter 6. For increased presence of books see Havelock, 'Oral Composition', 62. That poets were taught in school is based on the exchange commencing at Aristophanes' *Clouds* 1364, though it is a possibility that K.J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Clouds* (Oxford, 1970), *ad loc.*, explicitly denies. W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 96-7, lists several fifth-century cups with visual presentations of Attic schools.

[10] I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York, 1936), 89-138.

[11] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York and London, 1985), 8.

be done about it. Argumentation about parody becomes specious when both vehicle and ground must be understood from the tenor. There exist two levels of identifiability that must be distinguished. What is available to us, and what was available to a fifth-century citizen are intersecting sets, limited by factors such as Athenian literacy, and it becomes clear that only when the source is in the intersecting area will parody be identifiable.

Before examining how particular transtextual triggers work, it is necessary to describe the process for which I am using the term 'parody'. Parrott gives a standard view of what parody is: 'Parody is specifically concerned with mockery of the style of the author–the language, the way it's used, the subject matter'.[12] There are problems with this, though. By making mockery the principal definitional element, works containing parody are only derivative. More helpful is Rabinowitz, who identifies seven 'categories of literary recycling', two of which are relevant here. He distinguishes the narrative audience (the characters within the work that attend to a given speech) from the authorial audience (that for whom the author is writing; in the tragedians' case, those attending the City Dionysia). He says that when both the narrative and authorial audience know the source, this is 'criticism', and when the authorial audience knows the original, and the narrative audience does not, this is 'parody'.[13]

This definition is useful in that it restricts parody to an author's game with his audience: in *Hecuba*, for example, it is not that Polymestor is remembering Agamemnon's offstage cry as he is being blinded, but rather it is Euripides reminding his audience of Aeschylus' use of the same device in the play *Agamemnon*.[14] Euripides' agenda in doing so is apparently independent of the storytelling of the play, except in the extent that plot-structure and allusion both seek to undermine the *Oresteia*. While it is sometimes useful, Rabinowitz's distinction breaks down in explicit metatheatre, which is exactly the test-case against which a critical definition of this sort should be resistant. In comedy, characters may acknowledge a source by name while still avoiding Rabinowitz's category of 'criticism', as Euripides and his kinsman do in *Women at the Thesmophoria*.

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[12] E.O. Parrott, *Imitations of Immortality: A Book of Literary Parodies* (Harmondsworth, 1986), 2.

[13] Peter J. Rabinowitz, '"What's Hecuba to Us?" The Audience's Experience of Literary Borrowing', in *The Reader and the Text*, edd. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton, 1980), 241-63, especially 247-8. The citation comes from p. 246.

[14] Raanana Meridor, 'Eur. *Hec.* 1035-38', *AJPh* 96 (1975), 5-6.

A tighter definition comes from Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Parody*. Hutcheon's intention is to maintain a clear distinction between parody and other imitative genres, notably pastiche and burlesque.[15] For Hutcheon, parody distinguishes a background text, *Agamemnon* in the previous example, and the foregrounded text, *Hecuba*, which demonstrates 'repetition with critical difference'. This 'trans-contextualization' (as she calls it)[16] is rooted therefore in irony (a concept central to Hutcheon's understanding of postmodernity) rather than mockery. Parody, as 'repetition with critical difference', allows for metatheatrical consciousness to be exhibited by characters at the narrative level, and avoids value-laden judgements at the authorial level about so-called derivative art. My earlier insistence on the source of the parody being identifiable to the audience is no longer an arbitrary requirement. Crucially, it becomes the background text, without which there can be no trans-contextualisation.

There do of course exist other viable models to explain Euripides' relationship with Aeschylus: one thinks perhaps of Bloom and his Freudian vision of literary history, with poets living 'anxiously in the shadow of a "strong" poet who came before them, as sons are oppressed by their fathers'.[17] It is Hutcheon's definition that permits the most interpretative scope. Euripides ironically trans-contextualises passages of Aeschylus, and does so in a way that can be detected by the audience at the City Dionysia.

Specific examples will show how Aeschylus was known in antiquity. Because of space restrictions, not every instance of parody in Euripides can be considered, of course; and quite often I have felt that an example using Sophocles as either the parodist or parodied is clearer or more immediately obvious, and therefore advantageous. I want to begin, though, with a few examples of things that

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[15] Fred W. Householder Jr., 'ΠΑΡΩΙΔΙΑ', *CPh* 39 (1944), 1-9, makes a similar distinction, not mentioned by Hutcheon, *Theory*, as Margaret A. Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* (Cambridge, 1993), 239 n. 145 notes.

[16] Hutcheon, *Theory*, 20, and cf. index entry under 'trans-contextualization'.

[17] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford, 1983), 183. Harold Bloom's theories, expressed in *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford, 1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford, 1975), deserve more attention than can be provided here. Bloom suggests several strategies that the younger poets might use to overcome the debt to their literary fathers. One which has clear resonances on Euripides' use of Aeschylus is the deliberate attempt to create a sense of priority for himself, which Euripides is seen doing in his adaptations of the Aeschylean versions of the myths.

are not parodies, in the sense that I have outlined, though they might easily be misunderstood as such, and are often called such in the commentaries. Some steering orders are needed.

If it requires the *TLG* on *CD-ROM* to see a parallel, it is unlikely that we are dealing with parody. This is because, as has been stressed, parody works like metaphor, and unless the audience member in question can effect the trans-contextualisation, it will fail. (Failure is a possibility we should not allow, given our limited resources; though Euripides seldom won at the Dionysia, he was often granted a chorus and we cannot let ourselves be duped into thinking that his lack of success was because of literary cross-references.) So in *Frogs* 1336 where Aeschylus (imitating Euripides' style) sings the word μελανονεκυείμονα ('dressed-in-black-death-clothes'), it is not right to call this is a parody of μελανοπτερύγων ('black-winged') in *Hecuba* 71, or of μελανόπτερον ('black-feathered') in *Hecuba* 705, even though some comic expansion of these seems to be evident. Why this is so is that neither of the Euripidean parallels for a *melano-* compound are relevant to the context of the *Frogs* passage. This is not to say Aristophanes was ignorant of the Euripidean example from almost two decades before. Rather, what he expected his audience to think was not 'Oh! This imitated dream is just like Hecuba's dream was twenty years ago', but instead 'How Euripidean this sounds'. While some of the audience may relate the words to *Hecuba*, the precise source passage is not necessary for understanding the joke. Aristophanes does not expect of his audience members his own degree of learning.

Similar is the redoubled φόνια φόνια ('bloody, bloody') in the same line of Aristophanes: anadiplosus is a feature of Euripidean monody in general (*Hecuba* 689-90 has ἄπιστ' ἄπιστα, καινὰ καινά– 'faithless, faithless, new, new'), and Stanford[18] counts eighteen instances in the Phrygian's monody in *Orestes*, but it is not parodic of an identifiable context. Even the wholesale quotation of Euripides' *Electra* 435-6 at *Frogs* 1317-18 lacks the critical difference required of parody. What is important in the song is conveying a Euripidean flavour, and not parody of a particular Euripidean passage. Verbal parallels alone do not necessarily make parody.[19]

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[18] W.B. Stanford, *Aristophanes: The Frogs* (Basingstoke and London, 1971), *ad loc.*

[19] It may be objected that Hutcheon's definition is too narrow, and disqualifies too many possible examples of parody. The point of the present argument is not that

These last examples help to formulate another tenet against which to guard ourselves. A potential source-passage must show more than vague similarities to the supposed parody. In Euripides' *Suppliants* 846-56 there is what is variously termed a 'disingenuous sneer', or a 'laugh at tragic conventions',[20] for which even deletion has been proposed. Theseus says, in essence, he does not wish to hear a messenger speech; Adrastus obliges and gives a funeral oration instead. Commentators have seen literary indebtedness to Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* and his *Eleusinians*, and to Thucydides 7. 44. 1. While the context is here identifiable (by moderns and ancients alike), there is no anchor to a particular example, no key for the context. Conscious difference exists, but there is no actual repetition.

Even when the referent is certain, as at *Phoenicians* 751-2 when Eteocles decides not to enumerate his battle plans because time presses, as Aeschylus has him do in *Seven against Thebes*, the context is still without a key. These last examples are related to Euripides' *Electra* 759–'Where are the messengers?' (discussed by Arnott)[21]–where the general nature of the reference is more apparent, and clearly no particular text is the object of an allusion.

Another case to be disqualified are clever neologisms that gain popular currency. For example, it seems the Greeks were so habitually cursing Paris and his so-called 'marriage' to Helen that compounds were regularly formed, modelled on *Iliad* 3. 39 and 13. 769 Δύσπαρις ('Bad-Paris'): Alcman (*PMG* 77 = Diehl 73) Δύσπαρις Αἰνόπαρις ('Bad-Paris Dread-Paris'), *Agamemnon* 713 αἰνόλεκτρον ('dread-bedded'), *Hecuba* 945 Αἰνόπαριν, *Helen* 1120 αἰνόγαμος ('dread-wedded'), *Orestes* 1387 (the Phrygian speaks) Δυσελένας ('Bad-Helen'), among the tragic *adespota* (Kannicht, *TrGF* 644. 30) αἰνογάμου, and at Lycophron 820 αἰνόλεκτρον again. Because no sure source can be determined (except perhaps for Alcman) this is not trans-contextualisation.

In Richard Garner's study of allusion in Greek poetry, *From Homer to Tragedy*, he distinguishes three types of literary reference: imitation, allusion, and collusion. All of the above examples–if he

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Euripides is doing something called 'parody', but that what he is doing is repetition with critical difference, which is how Hutcheon uses the word parody.

[20] Christopher Collard, *Euripides: Supplices*, 2 Vols. (Groningen, 1975), *ad loc.*

[21] W. Geoffrey Arnott, 'Euripides and the Unexpected', in *Greek Tragedy*, edd. Ian McAuslan and Peter Walcot (Oxford, 1993), 138-52, especially 139-41.

had considered them–would be labelled imitation. Parody, in Hutcheon's definition, includes examples from each of the other two categories. For Garner, allusion is when 'an audience might appreciate the relation of tenor and vehicle', and collusion when the source passage provides thematic relevance to the foregrounded passage.[22] The example of collusion he gives is the relevance of the Homeric Odysseus and Telemachus to Orestes and his situation in the *Oresteia*.[23] Examples of collusion would seem to be profitable for discerning trans-contextualisation, or parody. Even here, though, Garner disappoints. He is surely right that the collusive references to the *Oresteia* (of which he counts up to thirteen) in Sophocles' *Trachinians* do argue for a parallel between Heracles' homecoming and Agamemnon's,[24] but the fourteen in Sophocles' *Electra* are due more to identical storyline than conscious repetition with critical difference.[25] We must sieve out such coincidental references, and focus on deliberate ones, inasmuch as they can be determined.[26]

The permeation of Homeric vocabulary in poetry of the fifth century makes it often very hard to discern conscious parody from general epicism. One example Garner mentions that is certainly parody is an Aeschylean echo of Homer's *Odyssey*. In *Libation Bearers* 877-9, after Aegisthus' murder, 'a servant rushes out with breathless and somewhat confusing–perhaps realistically confused–orders: open up, loosen the bolts, get a strong young man'.[27] This is the reverse of the expected order of events, but appropriate because it is the third element of the increasing tricolon that is the allusion. The words μάλ' ἡβῶντος ('in the prime of youth') at *Libation Bearers* 879

[22] Richard Garner, *From Homer to Tragedy: The Art of Allusion in Greek Poetry* (London and New York, 1990). Allusion is defined (with citation) on p. 20, collusion on p. 38. One of the biggest problems with the book is its unacknowledged selectivity in order to keep it to a manageable size: lacking rigid criteria for what is and is not included, the edges of all categories remain frustratingly blurry.

[23] Garner, *Allusion*, 147-54.

[24] Garner, *Allusion*, 210-11 lists the examples. On p. 140, he concludes his examination of the play thus: 'In Sophocles' . . . *Trachiniae* the curse is not familial; it is literary . . . The machinery of Agamemnon's death is invented by his ancestors; that of Heracles's death . . . by Sophocles' colleagues.' This precisely sums up what is accomplished by parody in Hutcheon's sense. The relationship of the *Oresteia* to the *Trachinians* cannot be pressed to far, since the date of Sophocles' play is highly conjectural.

[25] Garner, *Allusion*, 212 and 244 n. 53 notwithstanding.

[26] The metaphor derives from Garner, *Allusion*, 135: 'But the same sieve that can pan the lost Aeschylean nuggets from the surviving Sophoclean stream has not yet been devised.'

[27] Garner, *Allusion*, 38-9.

echo μάλ' ἡβῶν ('in the prime of youth') at *Odyssey* 23. 187. The source is a well-known passage (Penelope tricks Odysseus in mentioning their bed) and the words precisely echoed in the background passage come from a line-end.

The source is therefore identifiable, and the repetition thematically appropriate: just as the order of commands is reversed, so is the tone–from welcome in Homer, to panic in Aeschylus. This meets Hutcheon's definition of parody, as well as being appropriate for the audience: there is a verbal key, which is heard, and a known context, which is understood. The example is interesting because the third element of the Aeschylean tricolon is climactic only because of the Homeric literary analogue. It is this which signals the parody.

Compare Euripides, *Orestes* 218 βούλῃ θίγω σου κἀνακουφίσω δέμας; ('Should I touch you and lift up your body?') with a line written by Sophocles in 409, the previous year, *Philoctetes* 761: βούλῃ λάβωμαι δῆτα καὶ θίγω τί σου; ('Should I take hold then and touch you?'). The context for both is the same: the sick man eponymous in each play is comforted by a friend. The beginning of each line has the same 'intimate' colloquialism which permits the identification which is confirmed by the repeated verb.[28]

Next, it is generally taken now that *Cyclops* also postdates *Philoctetes*, and here too is a true example of parody. The parallel context is provided by the similarity of the general setting, focusing on the cave with two mouths. In *Philoctetes* the two-mouthed cave is important as a landmark for Odysseus. In the antepenultimate line of *Cyclops* (707), Polyphemus mentions that he will go to the mountaintop δι' ἀμφιτρῆτος τῆσδε ('through this pierced-through [rock or cave]'). Dale notes the obliqueness of the phrase and concludes that this is most likely an allusion to the only other known use of the adjective, at *Philoctetes* 19. This allusive joke is given very late in the play (compare how early the detail appears in Sophocles' play) after the Cyclops has covered a single cave mouth to prevent sailors escaping at 668. Euripides is not here being sloppy. Because the description in *Cyclops* occurs after there is any possible narrative benefit, it is necessary for the reader or audience member to consider possible meta-narrative benefit. At the end of his satyr play, as

[28] Garner, *Allusion*, 150. For the expression βούλῃ + subjunctive at the start of a line cf. P.T. Stevens, *Colloquial Expressions in Euripides* (*Hermes Einzelschrift* 38) (Weisbaden, 1976), 60-1. C.W. Willink, *Euripides: Orestes* (Oxford, 1986), *ad loc.*, calls the repetition 'strikingly reminiscent'.

virtually the last words the audience will hear in the theatre that day, Euripides makes a final parodic reference to Sophocles' innovation of the previous year, providing both key and context.[29]

With both the Euripidean references to *Philoctetes*, how the audience was expected to have known the source is clear: one year previous, the source for the parody was performed, and the audience overlap, between the two events, was likely over eighty per cent.[30] Examples of this type can be multiplied, even to include Parry's[31] borrowed and reborrowed line from Euripides' *Andromeda* (fr. 125), to Aristophanes' *Women at the Thesmophoria* 1105, and back to Euripides, at *Cyclops* 222. In all these examples, the playwright provides a familiar context, and a key word to trigger the identification. Context and key are both essential when both background and foregrounded texts are known by the audience as spoken texts. The same criteria are met in the previous example of the *Oresteia*'s parody of the *Odyssey*, which might suggest the audience knew those passages of Homer through rhapsodic performance.

Much less precision is required in a few particular instances: allusions to *Iliad* 6 and 22 in the fifth century are many[32] and lack the context/key duality. What these books have in common (and here the next three most-cited Homeric books, *Iliad* 1, 24, and *Odyssey* 9, probably can be added) is that they are most likely to have been used as school texts, and thus be familiar to the audience in memories of written sources. In these cases, either key (exact verbal parallel) or context (situational similarity) is sufficient for identifiability. Nor is this in any way surprising. So let me hypothesise a rule: if the parodied source (vehicle; background text) was known from a written text, either key or context is sufficient; both are needed if the source is known orally.

[29] Richard Seaford, 'The Date of Euripides' *Cyclops*', *JHS* 102 (1982), 161-72; A.M. Dale, *Collected Papers* (Cambridge, 1969), 129. If Euripides had wanted to introduce the two-mouthed cave earlier in the drama it certainly would have been possible. Line 197 for example, where Silenus describes to Odysseus how safe hiding in the cave is, would be an excellent and obvious opportunity.

[30] This is only an approximation. More data and information than are available would be required for the statistical work to provide a surer figure.

[31] Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse* (Oxford, 1971), 319.

[32] Garner, *Allusion*, 190-7, lists more allusions from these books than any other in Homer, and cf. p. 179, where he also notes the familiarity Athenians demonstrate with the first two plays of the *Oresteia*. Homer's poems may not have been divided into the books which we know them by until Hellenistic times. This does not affect the present argument. However Homer was divided in the fifth century, it is the memorable passages being cited, which happen to correspond more or less to what are now called *Iliad* 6 and 22.

How does this rule apply to Euripides' use of Aeschylus? Of the extant works of Aeschylus, *Suppliants* and *Prometheus Bound* are alluded to almost never.[33] The other plays have as many or more allusions than the Homeric books just mentioned. These counts are based largely on Garner, whose lists are not complete. They are nevertheless an impartial and extensive sample for the present purpose.[34] The nature of these allusions, by and large, divides the plays of the *Oresteia* from *Persians* and *Seven against Thebes.*[35]

References to these last two plays typically seem to presume a knowledge of the written text, that these were the plays which might have been taught, in whole or in part, in schools. Garner gives some examples of the *Persians* in *Hecuba*, which are convenient to repeat. Key alone seems to be sufficient when the chorus of captive Trojan women ironically repeat the war cry of *Persians* 402, at *Hecuba* 930 ὦ παῖδες Ἑλλάνων ('O Children of the Greeks')[36]–just as context alone is sufficient for the similarities between *Hecuba* 94 and *Persians* 619-20, where:

> Like Hecuba, Aeschylus' Atossa has a dream which has caused her to worry about the welfare of her child, and so she orders the chorus to pray to the gods of the underworld . . . both great eastern queens have just had great blows dealt to their empires by Greeks . . .[37]

[33] Garner, *Allusion*, lists no allusions to *Prometheus Bound* (supporting a case for a late date?) and (on p. 199) two to the *Suppliants*: one in *Prometheus Bound*, the other in the very bookish and late *Iphigeneia in Aulis*.

[34] Garner, *Allusion*, 190-221 comprise two lists of allusions: Appendix E, 'Passages Used by Poets', list by foregrounded text; Appendix F, 'Poets' Allusions by Work', list by background text. The latter was used for the present sampling.

[35] Aeschylus' joke in the *Frogs* about his plays living while Euripides' had died with him could refer to either or both of these means of preservation. The martial values Aristophanes has Aeschylus ascribe to his drama at *Frogs* 1021 ('I made drama full of Ares') is associated explicitly with *Seven against Thebes* (1021) and *Persians* (1026), where the plays are referred to by name. It might also be relevant that it is another character (Euripides) who refers to the *Oresteia* by name (1124), and there the reference is imprecise: the request to start form the beginning elicits the (otherwise unknown) opening lines of *Libation Bearers*.

[36] The resonances of this allusion remain apparent today: Maurice Balme and Gilbert Lawall, *Athenaze* Book 1 (Oxford, 1990), 189, give *Persians* 399-405 as the first Aeschylus (and indeed the first poetry) that students who use their course read.

[37] Garner, *Allusion*, 129.

For someone who has read *Persians* (and who is alert to the possibility of transtextual reference in the genre), the trans-contextualisation is easily effected in both of these situations. Similarly, Hutchinson says that *Seven against Thebes* was 'often imitated in the latter half of the fifth century' and that 'such imitation is likely to come from reading'. It is in this context that Aristophanes' use of Euripides' *Telephus* is probably best explained, perhaps also combined with the use of anecdote, the first of the five ways earlier suggested that Aeschylus might be known.[38]

A different situation exists in instances of parody of the *Oresteia* in Euripides. Garner does not consider any of the following examples, but in all of them, both key and context are given. This provides the audience with the necessary information to trans-contextualise, even if they had not read a text (in the straightforward sense), and it were known only through performance or reperformance. Earlier I referred to offstage cries in *Agamemnon* (458) being echoed in *Hecuba* (c.424), as they are again in *Cyclops* (408). Without going into particulars, the fact that Arnott can draw up a list of seven 'canonical features of the pattern'[39] which encompass the extant examples, complete with verbal parallels, proves that the audience had the necessary information to anticipate what was going to be said by virtue of the process of trans-contextualisation.

Another instance comes from the end of *Hecuba*: having announced that Hecuba is about to metamorphose into a dog, Polymestor goes on to predict that (1) Cassandra will be killed, (2) by Clytemnestra, (3) as will Agamemnon, (4) in a bath, (5) with an axe. Five details in four lines, effectively predicting the plot of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, to Agamemnon before the event has taken place. This creates what Goff would call 'something like a literary-historical joke': what is almost a retroactive cancellation of Aeschylus' play, mythically before but historically after the events have taken place. That these lines are filled with key words from the *Oresteia* is not surprising; indeed, by now it is expected.[40]

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[38] Hutchinson, *Septem*, xli. Rosemary Harriot, 'Aristophanes' Audience and the Plays of Euripides', *BICS* 9 (1962), 1-8, at 6, lists the *Telephus* of 438 as the most-cited Euripidean play in extant Aristophanes, with seventeen quotations between 425 and 405 (i.e., thirteen to thirty three years after the initial performance).

[39] W. Geoffrey Arnott, 'Off-Stage Cries and the Choral Presence: Some Challenges to Theatrical Convention in Euripides', *Antichthon* 16 (1982), 35-43, at 38. For the present example, see also Meridor, '*Hec.* 1035-38'.

[40] The most recent discussion of this passage is Anne Pippin Burnett, 'Hekabe the Dog', *Arethusa* 27 (1994), 151-64. Polymestor's anticipation of the *Agamemnon* are

A third example comes from the *Orestes*: at a crucial moment the action is halted, and out of the palace runs a Phrygian slave, who functions as a messenger. His opening words are structurally obscure, he does not speak proper Greek, and his artificial dialect is a caricature. Context and key link this passage with Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*. Her opening words are obscure, and not even certainly Greek (1072-3): ὀτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ · | ὦπολλον ὦπολλον (*hototototoi popoi da*, Apollo! Apollo!'). This phrase is repeated at lines 1076-7, and the second line only at 1080 and 1085. Only gradually does her meaning become clear to the audience. To the chorus listening, she remains completely unfathomable, as their questions indicate. Note how structurally similar the reflection is between the two: an effeminate/female enslaved Trojan at Argos, singing wildly, and prone to anadiplosis, is in lyric dialogue with a Choryphaeus speaking trimeters. The staging is reversed (providing critical difference) in that what Cassandra says is going to happen, the Phrygian has just witnessed. Also, after the long lyric passage, Orestes comes out of the palace and threatens the Phrygian with a sword in exactly the same way we expect his mother Clytemnestra to have threatened Cassandra once she entered the palace. In sum, the Phrygian is a perfect mirror of Aeschylus' Cassandra, and Euripides' craft is shown to be efficient, easily permitting the trans-contextualisation.[41]

All these examples share the features that were observed in plays that the audience were expected to have known from performance. This suggests a recent performance (which is to say a reperformance) of the *Oresteia*, probably sometime in the 420s, at the City Dionysia. The evidence for this is the way that it has impacted contemporary texts by Euripides and Aristophanes. It is of course possible that the combined provision by Euripides of key and context to the *Oresteia* is just the playwright providing 'extra information', as it were, so that those less familiar with the written versions of the *Oresteia* would understand the reference. But the benefits to a semi-literate of verbal repetition as an *aide-de-memoire* are dubious, and

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in lines 1275, 1277, 1279, and 1281 (stichomythia with Hecuba and Agamemnon). In the light of Barbara E. Goff, 'The Sign of the Fall: The Scars of Orestes and Odysseus', *Class. Antiq.* 10 (1991), 259-67 (the citation comes from p. 266 n. 24), Garner's formulation that other works 'literally contain his characters' past' (*Allusion*, 47) cannot be maintained.

[41] The rich texturing of the Phrygian's monody deserves more detailed attention which cannot be provided here.

because of how the presentation of the *Oresteia* differs from *Persians* and *Seven against Thebes*, this is more unlikely still.

Not every audience member is going to trans-contextualise correctly or completely in every instance. The possibility must therefore be considered that Euripides (or any playwright practising parody) is not writing for his full audience, but for a select group of *cognoscenti* particularly well-versed in the circulating literary texts. In such a scenario, there is a higher plane of understanding (the qualitative difference is essential to the position) that is accessible to part of the audience that is otherwise inaccessible to the majority. This is an essential element in the premise of Philip Vellacott's *Ironic Drama*, where the subtle irony he sees is available only to readers and not to any theatre audience.[42]

While such internal privileging is possible, it does ignore the crucially democratic nature of the dramatic competitions. Every detail of the production procedure, from initial selection to the final casting of ballots, required the will of an unpredictable fraction of the whole audience. A playwright could and would not willingly disenfranchise himself by learned obscurities. For an audience (or subaudience) does know when it is being excluded from understanding a point. As Rehm notes, the poets 'constructed their tragedies so as to implicate the audience emotionally and intellectually, consciously and unconsciously, not only in the story but in the very processes of the drama'.[43] The playwright is going to try to encompass as much of his audience as he can. While not every member will enjoy Euripides' literary parody (as not every member will enjoy Aristophanes' scatological humour), all in theory will possess the means for accessing it. Many passages (such as *Libation Bearers* 877-9, discussed above) only make dramatic sense if allusion is understood by the greater majority of the audience.

My final examples come from Euripides' *Electra*–without which no examination of Euripides' appropriation of the *Oresteia* would be

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[42] Philip Vellacott, *Ironic Drama: A Study of Euripides' Method and Meaning* (Cambridge, 1975), 245 n. 10. To my knowledge, no one has privileged an audience on non-intellectual grounds. For example, the audience at regional reperformances outside of principal Athenian festivals is not usually perceived as having particular advantage in understanding literary references. While such a possibility is as unlikely, it at least recognises the benefit of accessing a dramatic text through performance, which Euripides surely understood.

[43] Rush Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theatre* (London, 1992), 45. The clearest plausible account of the final voting procedure is that of Maurice Pope, 'Athenian Festival Judges–Seven, Five or However Many', *CQ*² 36 (1986), 322-6.

complete.[44] Again, both key and context are provided by Euripides to allow the audience to recognise the parody. Even disallowing similarities for parallel storylines that might be co-incidental, there are a number of clear indications that the audience is expected to have seen the *Libation Bearers* performed on stage. Sophocles' *Electra* at times shows the same thing, where there is a two-and-a-half-word key, with overlapping context: Aegisthus' speech at line 1479 οἴμοι, ξυνῆκα τοὔπος ('Oh no, I've understood the word') recalls Clytemnestra's at *Libation Bearers* 887 οἴ 'γώ, ξυνῆκα τοὔπος ἐς αἰνιγμάτων ('Oh my, I've understood the word about the riddle').[45]

The recognition scene of Euripides' *Electra* 524-79 is infamous for its direct references to that of the *Libation Bearers* 164-224, where Electra demolishes each of the Old Man's suggested tokens that had been effective (narratively, and dramatically) in Aeschylus' play, only to suggest the additional token of the scar which has Homeric analogues. In this scene, Hutcheon's and Parrott's definitions of parody are both realised. Here is total mockery, and total irony. The Old Man (representing one who meta-theatrically 'remembers' the earlier play perhaps?)[46] dutifully repeats the tokens, and Electra provides critical difference. Even allowing for parallel vocabulary, there is evidence of the deliberate placing of key words, at both the beginning of lines–*Electra* 520 σκέψαι δὲ χαίτην προστιθεῖσα σῇ κόμῃ ('Examine the lock, putting it next to your own hair') echoes *Libation Bearers* 229 σκέψαι, τομῇ προσθεῖσα βόστρυχον τριχός ('Examine it, putting your hair curl next to the cutting')–and line ends, where *Electra* 530 πολλοῖς δ' ἂν εὕροις βοστρύχους ὁμοπτέρους ('Many people might have curls of the same feather') echoes *Libation Bearers* 174 καὶ μὴν ὅδ' ἐστι κάρτ' ἰδεῖν ὁμόπτερος ('In fact, in appearance this is very much of the same feather').[47]

Verbal keys and identical contexts allow full trans-contextualisa-

[44] There is an extensive bibliography on this controversial passage. Most useful is N.G.L. Hammond, 'Spectacle and Parody in Euripides *Electra*', *GRBS* 25 (1984), 373-87. Other studies, in chronological order, include: H. Lloyd-Jones, 'Some Alleged Interpolations in Aeschylus' *Choephori* and Euripides' *Electra*', *CQ*[2] 11 (1961), 171-84; Godfrey W. Bond, 'Euripides' parody of Aeschylus', *Hermathena* 118 (1974), 1-14; David Bain, '[Euripides], *Electra* 518-44', *BICS* 24 (1977), 104-16; M.L. West, 'Tragica IV', *BICS* 27 (1980), 9-22, especially 17-21; George Gellie, 'Tragedy and Euripides' *Electra*', *BICS* 28 (1981), 1-12; and James W. Halporn, 'The Skeptical Electra', *HSCPh* 87 (1983), 101-18.

[45] Garner, *Allusion*, 125.

[46] Hammond, 'Spectacle', 382, suggests the Old Man represents Aeschylus himself.

[47] Garner, *Allusion*, 118.

tion from one passage to the other. Hammond argues convincingly for non-verbal similarities between the plays as well, noting responding techniques of stagecraft. The target audience for such similarities must comprise the bulk of those attending the performance, as Rehm describes:

> Distrust of such quirky dramatic practices once led scholars to delete the passages as spurious, but recent critics have recognized that Euripides systematically involves the audience in this kind of dialectical relationship, alternating between their belief in the illusion of the play and their awareness that they are part of the process by which that illusion occurs.[48]

This mutual awareness shows that the genre of tragedy (and comedy, and satyr-play) was alert to literary borrowing, and that an audience could expect the intellectual challenge it presents, in addition to the emotional effect described in Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Recently, Kovacs has argued forcefully for the deletion of part of this passage.[49] Whether he is right or wrong does not ultimately affect the present interpretation. Whoever composed the passage wrote something that when it was performed on stage was expected to be understood by the audience, an audience who had seen the *Libation Bearers* on stage. In Kovacs' interpretation, the author of the passage in Euripides was a writer of Middle Comedy. While this is quite far away from the earlier hypothesised reproduction of the *Oresteia* in the 420s, it is not a significant problem, as it is known that Aeschylus' plays were also reproduced in the fourth century, in 386 and after.

I have tried to sketch out the way I believe poetic borrowings should be approached in tragedy, and think that this model has potential applications (as I have suggested in passing) for Aristophanic paratragedy, as well as some knottier problems, such as the textual relationship between *Bacchants* and *Oedipus at Colonus*.[50] The model emphasises how parody works in performance, what the audience's experience of trans-contextualisation actually is. It seems Euripides, and his colleagues, did make reference to each other's

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48 Rehm, *Greek Tragic Theatre*, 48.

49 David Kovacs, 'Euripides, *Electra* 518-44: Further Doubts about Genuineness', *BICS* 36 (1989), 67-78.

50 Garner, *Allusion*, 163-4.

works, in a manner that was wholly appropriate to tragedy and its ritual context. It was not necessarily motivated out of a sense of mockery, but had its roots in innovation: to be able to repeat either what had been seen (in the case of the *Oresteia*), or what had been read (in the case of *Persians*, or *Seven against Thebes*), while still providing critical distance, was a valued and artistic device for effective transtextual literary communication.[51]

[51] Some of the ideas in this chapter about *Hecuba* were first discussed in my doctoral dissertation (Edinburgh, 1992), and were presented to the Scottish Universities Drama Seminar in Glasgow in June, 1992. The parallels between the Phrygian in *Orestes* and Cassandra in *Agamemnon* and the use of Hutcheon, *Theory*, were presented to the Atlantic Classical Association, in Sackville, N.B., in October, 1993. I am grateful to all who made comments on those occasions, as well as the useful criticisms of the present chapter by those who heard it at the Hobart conference, and those by the anonymous referee.

CHAPTER SIX

LITERACY AND OLD COMEDY[1]

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Discussion of Old Comedy itself has been surprisingly absent from recent treatments of orality and literacy even in the fifth century, despite the fact that significant evidence for Athenian literacy comes from comic texts. Rosalind Thomas's recent synthetic book on the topic has three index entries for tragedy, for example, but none for comedy.[2] I propose here to examine two related but not equally familiar topics: first, what is the nature of Old Comedy's evidence for literacy and literate culture in Athens in the late fifth century; and second, what picture does Old Comedy paint of its own relation to poetic tradition, or more specifically, where does Aristophanes stand (for here we must speak more narrowly) in relation to both oral and literate culture?

Old Comedy tells us of books and booksellers at least a generation before Socrates' famous mention of the book trade in the *Apology* (26d-e). Eupolis fr. 327 K-A (οὗ τὰ βιβλί' ὤνια, 'where the books are for sale') is our earliest reference to the sale of books in Athens.[3] A one-word fragment of Aristomenes (fr. 9 K-A), another poet who began his career before Aristophanes, gives us *bibliopoles* ('bookseller') from his play *Sorcerors*. The title characters (the chorus, to judge from the plural) were presumably frauds of some kind who were satirised in the play. It is dangerous to build much on a title, but discussion of books and booksellers in this context may be evi-

[1] Text and translations of Aristophanes are cited from Alan H. Sommerstein, *The Comedies of Aristophanes* (Warminster, 1980-); comic fragments from R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin, 1983-)–hereafter K-A.

[2] Rosalind Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992). Nor in W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), although there are more scattered references to Aristophanes.

[3] At least according to K. J. Dover, *Aristophanes: Frogs* (Oxford, 1993), 35, although since the play title is not known it could just conceivably date after Aristophanes' *Birds* (see below) and before Eupolis' possible death in 412. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 85 n. 92: 'Aristophanes' silence about booksellers may be significant'.

dence for the association of books with what Thomas calls the 'non-rational' or more particularly magical uses of writing, especially in the popular mind.[4]

Other evidence from Aristophanes, however, is pertinent to one of the questions which most concerns Thomas, the relation of writing and literacy to democracy. Thomas, following Brian Street, broadly contrasts 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy's effects on a given society and plants herself firmly in the 'ideological' camp. She traces the autonomous model, that writing is a technology which automatically transforms a society, back to Marshall McLuhan–hardly a recommendation in most minds today.[5] No doubt there have been far too many facile generalisations about the democratic effects of literacy. At the same time we should not neglect Aristophanic evidence that writing did transform certain kinds of activities and granted new and disturbing powers to those who had not possessed them before.

The *Birds* offers an interesting case in point. At 1277 ff. the herald is explaining how Peisthetairus and the birds are honoured and imitated by men. One example is that of the men who descend upon the shops of those who sell copies of decrees and feast on them (1286-9):

> Πρῶτον μὲν εὐθὺς πάντες ἐξ εὐνῆς ἅμα
> ἐπέτονθ' ἕωθεν ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ νομόν·
> κἀκεῖθεν ἂν κατῆρον εἰς τὰ βιβλία·
> εἶτ' ἂν ἐνέμοντ' ἐνταῦθα τὰ ψηφίσματα.
> First of all, when they got out of bed in the morning, right
> away they'd all fly together, just like us, to forage . . .
> among the laws; and then they'd swoop down together
> upon the bookstalls, and there browse through decrees.

The word *biblia* means both 'writings' and 'papyrus reeds' (i.e., bird food),[6] but if we look beyond the pun we see in this passage evidence for a private trade at Athens in copies of assembly decrees.

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[4] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, chap. 5. 2, 'The Non-Rational Use of Writing', especially 78-84.

[5] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 24 ff. Cf. also her earlier book, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), 24 ff.

[6] See Sommerstein *ad* 1288, *pace* Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 13 n. 22. Someone in Aristophanes' *Banqueters* fr. 226 K-A refers to baskets full of lawsuits and 'heaps of decrees' (ψηφισμάτων τε θωμούς).

Where Thomas views the stone inscriptions put up by the assembly as the authoritative version and finds little need or use for more ephemeral copies,[7] the passage in the *Birds* shows us that some individuals were quite willing to pay money for their own, written copies of decrees–and shows us moreover that Aristophanes was far from finding this an admirable thing.

The reason for his disdain is clear from two of the *alazones* we meet in the *Birds* trying to make a quick buck out of the new bird city: the decree-seller and the oracle-monger. Literacy made possible a trade in the written word and accorded some power to those who bought and sold writings. The oracle-seller (*chresmologos*) appears at line 960 to forbid the sacrifice by which Peisthetairus is attempting to inaugurate the new city of Nephelokokkyngia, citing from his book of oracles collected from Bacis and others. The book is the basis of his authority.[8]

This is not the first time we have encountered oracles (or even oracles of Bacis) in Aristophanes. Such oracles are the basis of Paphlagon's power in the *Knights* a decade earlier. The two slaves who may well have represented Nicias and Demosthenes in the prologue to that play steal Paphlagon's 'sacred oracle' (116) and discover the Sausage-seller is fated to overthrow Paphlagon. Literacy is not, however, really central to the action in this play. Demosthenes reads the oracle to Nicias, but this is simply exposition and tells us nothing about literacy among slaves; the same is true of the oracle contest between Paphlagon and the Sausage-seller (961 ff.), where both read their oracles to Demos. Relatively little weight is laid on the written nature of these oracles.[9]

The treatment of the oracle-seller in *Birds* is rather different. Now we should not expect accurate, dispassionate reportage of Aristophanes at this point: let us grant that a key reason for him to bring on the oracle-seller, equipped with a book roll, is to set up the physical comedy that follows; nonetheless, the notion of a book and its association with oracle-sellers must be familiar enough to the audience for the joke to be intelligible. The oracle-seller is trying to horn

[7] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 86-8, 132 ff. and *Oral Tradition*, 34-94.

[8] Cf. the second old woman at *Ecclesiazusae* 1050, who cites the 'letter of the law' (τῶν γραμμάτων εἰρηκότων) and may flourish a copy of the decree as she attempts to seize the young man.

[9] See R.A. Neil, *The Knights of Aristophanes* (Cambridge, 1909), *ad* 120 on purported distinctions between prose and verse oracles.

in on the sacrifice and, when challenged for his authority, tells Peisthetairus to 'Take the book' (Λαβὲ τὸ βιβλίον, 974, 977, and 981) and (it is implied) read his proof. Not incidentally, the exchange is a plausible argument for limited literacy if not illiteracy (such as Thomas imagines)[10] among the average Athenians whom Peisthetairus represents. We are surely *not* to imagine that the scroll actually contains what the oracle-seller claims: rather, he relies on Peisthetairus' inability either to read anything at all or to read quickly enough to challenge his interpretation of the obscure oracles. Yet Peisthetairus soon inverts the power relationship by producing his own scroll and giving his own 'reading' of oracles. Of particular interest is the fact that Peisthetairus claims to have *written down* the oracle himself (981-2):

> Οὐδὲν ἄρ' ὅμοιός ἐσθ' ὁ χρησμὸς τουτῳί,
> ὅν ἐγὼ παρὰ τἀπόλλωνος ἐξεγραψάμην·
> The oracle, I see, doesn't at all resemble this one, which I wrote down from the words of Apollo:

Sommerstein (*ad loc.*) notes that one would often write down an oracle to ensure accurate reporting later.[11] Here of course we are no longer bound by notions of character probability: the question of whether the kind of Athenian the character of Peisthetairus sometimes represents could and would regularly write is unanswerable—although Bdelycleon in *Wasps* and the Old Relative in *Thesmophoriazusae* are seen to write in their plays. The oracle-monger charges in fact that Peisthetairus is *not* reading what is written (Οὐδὲν λέγειν οἶμαί σε—'I think you're making it up', 986). The issue, however, is resolved by comic violence as Peisthetairus drives the oracle-seller away, probably beating him with the scroll he has produced.

It may initially seem puzzling that the written form of oracles should be thus foregrounded and made to seem more threatening in

[10] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 91-2 on 'phonetic literacy' (i.e., the ability to sound out written words and only comprehend the whole with difficulty) and more generally pp. 150-6 on the ways in which illiterate citizens could still participate in the democracy. One might recognise letters (for example, *Ecclesiazusae* 687, *Wealth* 277, 972, and fr. 634 K-A) without being able to read. Reading and writing also need not go together. The countryman of *Peace* 1183-4 has only to recognise his own name on his tribe's call-up list (cf. the orders posted on *pinakia* at *Birds* 450). Old Philocleon is capable of writing a graffito on a door (*Wasps* 99; cf. *Acharnians* 144); his son Bdelycleon takes notes of points to answer in his father's praise of the juryman's life (*Wasps* 538, 559, 576).

[11] Cf. Deborah Tarn Steiner, *The Tyrant's Writ* (Princeton, 1994), 80-1.

the *Birds* than it does a decade earlier in the *Knights*. Should writing not seem more familiar and therefore *less* threatening as time goes on? Carol Thomas' discussion of the textualisation of Greek religion may provide the necessary interpretive frame.[12] The *Birds* passage shows a growing anxiety over this textualisation: the technology of writing confers new power in the religious realm to anyone capable of writing down oracles and thus putting them into circulation, a move which broadens the pool of those with religious authority beyond the traditional religious elite.[13]

The decree-seller (*psephismatopoles*) is another who has been empowered by, and attempts to profit from, the technology of literacy (*Birds* 1035 ff.). He too arrives with a book, which Peisthetairus immediately identifies as something unwelcome (Τουτὶ τί ἐστιν αὖ κακόν, τὸ βιβλίον;–'What sort of nuisance is *this* now, this scroll?', 1037). Like the oracle-monger, he too is quickly driven off in a farcical and fast-paced scene, but we can pause to note a few new points. The decree-seller is clearly carrying his wares in easily portable form, on papyrus, but they will be translated into stone. One line (in prose) read out by the decree-seller supports Thomas' notion that the stone set up with the decree on it might be the authoritative version (1049-50): Ἐάν δέ τις ἐξελαύνῃ τους ἄρχοντας καὶ μὴ δέχηται κατὰ τὴν στήλην–('and if any person expel the officers and fail to admit them according to the decree –').[14] Another very quick joke suggests that the stone versions of decrees were actually points of resistance or display of disrespect to the laws, for he asks Peisthetairus Μέμνησ' ὅτε τῆς στήλης κατετίλας ἑσπέρας;–'Do you remember when you used to soil the pillar of the law, of an evening?' (1054).

The *Birds* is not the only play of Aristophanes in which reading and books are referred to. Far more attention has in fact usually been paid to the *Frogs*, where Dionysus' personal reading of

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[12] See chapter 11.

[13] David Phillips in discussion after this paper called my attention to Isocrates 19 *Aegineticus* 5, where we learn that Polemaenetus bequeathed his books of divination to Thrasyllus. These became his capital, as it were, and allowed him to practise as a soothsayer (*mantis*). While divination and oracle-selling are not precisely the same, the Isocrates example illustrates the textualisation and indeed commercialisation of religion in the period.

[14] See now also the comments (pp. 44-5) on this passage by Rosalind Thomas, 'Literacy and the City-State in Archaic and Classical Greece', in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, edd. A.K. Bowman and G. Woolf (Cambridge, 1994), 33-50, with respect to writing as 'public display'.

Euripides' *Andromeda* (52-4) inspires his quest to bring back the poet. Most controversially, the chorus in the play claims the jokes are intelligible to the audience because 'each one has a book' (βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος, 1114). These passages raise the issue of the extent of the reading and understanding of literature in Athenian society and so have been of most interest to literary scholars. Yet the controversies over *Frogs* 1114 and Aristophanes fr. 506 K-A from the *Tagenistae* (τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρ' ἢ βιβλίον διέφθορεν / ἢ Πρόδικος ἢ τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν εἷς γέ τις–'A book has corrupted this man, / or Prodicus or some chatterer') do not prove much more than that readers of literary texts existed.[15] In the case of *Frogs*, having a book implies a flattering level of sophistication, in the *Tagenistae* apparently corruption (though lacking context, we do not know whether the speaker's point of view necessarily commands audience sympathy). Someone in Cratinus' *Nomoi* (fr. 128 K-A) seems proud of his illiteracy, or at least insists that his memory makes him just as effective as a literate person.[16] The Sausage-seller's minimal command of his letters in the *Knights* (οὐδὲ μουσικὴν ἐπίσταμαι / πλὴν γραμμάτων, καὶ ταῦτα μέντοι κακὰ κακῶς–'I've not even had any education, except for reading and writing, and I'm proper bad at that', 188-9), of which he seems somewhat embarrassed, is according to Demosthenes the one impediment to his forthcoming political career: the irony of this joke works, of course, only if not just literacy but in fact a more sophisticated appreciation of literature (comprehended under the term *mousike*) are generally viewed as desirable attributes.[17]

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[15] On *Frogs* 1114 see Dover, *Frogs*, 34 and Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 20 and n. 19. Both incline to the explanation of L. Woodbury, 'Aristophanes' *Frogs* and Athenian Literacy: *Ran.* 52-53, 1114', *TAPhA* 106 (1976), 349-57, that 'having a book' indicates a certain level of sophistication, rather than the notion that the audience brought books to the theatre performance (pp. 353-6), although cf. Dover's careful consideration of the usual range of *echon*. Although Steiner, *Tyrant's Writ*, 209-11, detects a pattern of associating books and a somewhat anti-democratic withdrawal from public life in this and other passages of *Frogs*, that pattern cannot be generalised to Old Comedy as a whole.

[16] ἀλλὰ μὰ Δί' οὐκ οἶδ' ἔγωγε γράμματ' οὐδ' ἐπίσταμαι
ἀλλ' ἀπὸ γλώττης φράσω σοι· μνημονεύω γὰρ καλῶς.
No, by Zeus, I can't read or write,
but I'll tell you by heart, for I remember fine.

In another fragment of Cratinus (300 K-A), a character swears by the *kurbeis* of Solon and Dracon, which are being used to roast barley: a rather startling display of disrespect for the written word!

[17] On *mousike* see Neil, *Frogs*, *ad* 189. The irascible Philocleon in *Wasps* 960-1 wishes a defendant had never learned his letters (*grammata*), because then he could not have falsified his accounts. Cf. also the title character in Eupolis's *Maricas* fr. 208 K-A.

Paradoxically, the evidence from *Birds* is the most valuable precisely because literacy itself is not the focus of the jokes.[18] Peisthetairus has gone off to Cloudcuckooland to escape the life of the democratic city–and it pursues him. The various Athenian *alazones* arrive in order to remake the bird city in their own image, and they come equipped with the tools to do so, including literacy. While we cannot say with certainty that Aristophanes in his own political views apart from this play saw particular dangers in widespread literacy, the humour is energised by at least some audience fear of its effects. It is conceivable that he regards literacy as facilitating too wide a spread of access to the formulae and apparatus of power, both civic and religious. Certainly his picture of the unfortunate allies harassed by decree-sellers is not a pretty one. Still, we should be cautious before we firmly label him a conservative who saw writing itself as a dangerous tool in the wrong hands.

The issue here is not really causality: literacy did not automatically generate oracle-mongers and decree-sellers who were such a visible excess of the radical democracy. Nonetheless, the picture Aristophanes paints is one in which new and undesirable political elements gain an ascendancy in which the technology of writing is a very valuable ally.

If we turn to the impact of literacy on comedy's own history, the outlines of the story are much less clear than in the political sphere but still suggestive. Comedy ought to be one of the prime areas of investigation for oral culture and the nature of poetic composition, but Thomas again has shown how, particularly in American scholarship, the dominance of the oral-formulaic model has minimised consideration of the composition of non-formulaic poetry and its relation to poetic tradition.[19] Most Old Comedy, furthermore, is not

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[18] One might speculate that there is a deeper reason for an interest in literacy in the *Birds* than meets the eye. Gregory Dobrov, 'The Tragic and the Comic Tereus', *AJPh* 114 (1993), 189-234 is a fascinating exploration of Aristophanes' transformations of the tragic figure of Tereus (as found in Sophocles) into the character we find in the *Birds*. He discusses (pp. 222-6) the disruptive power of literacy in the *Tereus* (the mute Philomela reveals her story and brings about Tereus' punishment through written signs) and makes metaphoric connections to the 'rewriting' of the story in Aristophanes. Peisthetairus must protect the bird city he has brought into being against 'rewriting' by outsiders, and this anxiety about writing may have some, perhaps unconscious connection to the role of writing in the *Tereus*.

[19] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 40-51. She is not alone–it is striking that as interesting and thorough a study as C.J. Herington, *Poetry in Drama: Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985) investigates evidence for performance of

even mythic, so there is not even a narrative link back to Homer and Hesiod.

At the same time comic poetry, precisely because of its contemporary nature, would seem to be intimately linked to the oral poetic culture of its time.[20] The first 'comedies', that is *komoi* in honour of Dionysus, were presumably storehouses of precisely the kind of short, ephemerally popular songs which constituted the *bulk* of oral poetic culture at any given time. These songs, linked as they were to specific historical individuals and events, vanished from public memory when those individuals or events ceased to have cultural importance.[21] The fate of politically based Aristophanic comedy after his own lifetime illustrates the point: jokes which needed an explanation outside the context of an Athenian performance were not funny and were not likely therefore to be performed, while a play relying on farcical action and parody, such as *Thesmophoriazusae*, might find a later audience.[22]

Now the question of the origins of comedy is just as confusing and controversial as that of tragedy, with which it is bound up.[23] I believe that this question, however, can be largely divorced from orality and literacy issues in the fifth century. If we confine our attention to the period of Athenian state sponsorship of comedy (starting in 486), we can still examine how comedy changed in its relation to oral and literate poetic culture during the fifth century.

I suggest that we can identify a shift in the nature of comedy going on at the time Aristophanes began his career, and I will further argue that a decay in the oral culture that transmitted comic verse outside the theatre is to be identified here. The central text for my argument is Aristophanes' account of his predecessors Magnes,

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many other poetic genres as well as tragedy—but not comedy. Non-mythic verse simply vanishes from consideration.

[20] J. Redondo, 'La poésie populaire grecque et les *Guêpes* d'Aristophane', *Drama 2: Intertextualität in der griechisch-römischen Komödie*, edd. N.W. Slater and B. Zimmermann (Stuttgart, 1993), 102-21 is a fascinating attempt to discern popular song forms behind a number of Aristophanes' verses.

[21] Though possibly not from private, family memory: see Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 108-9, on the evidence of Plato, *Lysis* 205b-e for songs about ancestors kept alive in families, especially by women. Presumably, though, families tended to preserve flattering portraits rather than the personal satires we associate with comic poetry.

[22] Oliver Taplin, *Comic Angels* (Oxford, 1993), 36-41 and *passim*, discusses the evidence for a *Thesmophoriazusae* performance in South Italy.

[23] I will simply cite the carefully considered account in A.W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*[2] rev. T.B.L. Webster (Oxford, 1962), 132-94.

Crates, and Cratinus in the parabasis of the *Knights* (518-30):

> ὑμᾶς τε πάλαι διαγιγνώσκων ἐπετείους τὴν φύσιν ὄντας
> καὶ τους προτέρους τῶν ποιητῶν ἅμα τῷ γήρᾳ προδιδόντας
> τοῦτο μὲν εἰδὼς ἅπαθε Μάγνης ἅμα ταῖς πολιαῖς κατιού-
> σαις,
> ὃς πλεῖστα χορῶν τῶν ἀντιπάλων νίκης ἔστησε τροπαῖα·
> πάσας δ' ὑμῖν φωνὰς ἱεὶς καὶ ψάλλων καὶ πτερυγίζων
> καὶ λυδίζων καὶ ψηνίζων καὶ βαπτόμενος βατραχειοῖς
> οὐκ ἐξήρκεσεν, ἀλλὰ τελευτῶν ἐπὶ γήρως, οὐ γὰρ ἐφ' ἥβης,
> ἐξεβλήθη πρεσβύτης ὤν, ὅτι τοῦ σκώπτειν ἀπελείφθη·
> εἶτα Κρατίνου μεμνημένος, ὃς πολλῷ ῥεύσας ποτ' ἐπαίνῳ
> διὰ τῶν ἀφελῶν πεδίων ἔρρει, καὶ τῆς στάσεως παρασύρων
> ἐφόρει τὰς δρῦς καὶ τας πλατάνους καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς προ-
> θελύμνους.
> ᾆσαι δ' οὐκ ἦν ἐν συμποσίῳ πλὴν 'Δωροῖ συκοπέδιλε',
> καὶ 'τέκτονες εὐπαλάμων ὕμνων'· οὕτως ἤνθησεν ἐκεῖνος.
>
> and also long ago he had recognised that your tastes are ephemeral, and that you abandoned the former generation of poets as soon as they grew old. He knew what happened to Magnes, for one, as soon as the white hairs stole upon him: Magnes who had set up so many trophies of victory over his rivals' choruses, yet though he produced every kind of sound for you, twanging the lyre, flapping wings, speaking Lydian, buzzing like a gall-fly and dyeing himself frog-green, he did not stay the course, but in the end, in his old age (never in his youth!), he was driven from the stage in his declining days because he was found wanting in satirical power. Then our poet remembered Cratinus, who once, gushing with your lavish applause, used to flow through the broad plains of artlessness, and uproot oak trees, plane trees and rivals, sweep them from their places and bear them downstream. At a party no song could be sung except 'Goddess of Bribery, figwood-shod' and 'Artificers of dexterous songs': so greatly did he flourish.

Of particular interest here is the portrait of Cratinus and the popular reception of his works. Aristophanes associates him with the last generation by placing him in the company of the long-dead Magnes and Crates (537 ff.), who, although he began as an actor for Cratinus and so was presumably somewhat younger, apparently was no

longer composing.[24] In the past then Cratinus' songs, two of which are identified by first line,[25] were picked up and sung repeatedly in symposia; that is, they became part of the contemporary song culture. Aristophanes' sly point, that these are 'golden oldies' and Cratinus has not had a hit for quite some time, does not vitiate the picture of the underlying mechanism. Comedy only gradually acquired plot. Magnes' plays, for which this passage is much of our evidence, apparently had little to remember in the way of structure: rather, his animal choruses and effects were his comic trademark. Magnes won eleven victories at the City Dionysia, but we have at most only nine titles of his plays.[26] Cratinus's earlier comedies may have been much closer to *The Scandals of 1927* than they were Aristophanes. Success was then defined by a few hit tunes which made the rounds of the symposia.

Cratinus at the end of his career, however, was very much up to date, as the victory of his *Wineflask* over Aristophanes' *Clouds* demonstrated.[27] This play even contained remarkably explicit references to the *writing* (not just the making or *poiesis*) of comedy. Though the text has been questioned, fragment 208 K-A refers to writing about Cleisthenes in a comic episode (γράφ' αὐτὸν / ἐν

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[24] Σ 537 (for Crates' acting career) and Sommerstein *ad loc.*, who suggests that his career as a dramatist spanned about 450-430. Cf. also Aristophanes fr. 347 K-A. Line 536 is nicely double edged: Cratinus is a monument who belongs in the front row as a spectator, next to the statue of Dionysus. See also note 16 above for attitudes about writing expressed by characters in Cratinus.

[25] K-A attribute them both to his *Eumenides* (fr. 70), rejecting Fabricius' conjecture of *Eunidae* in the scholia; Sommerstein accepts the attribution of both to *Eunidae*. The correction to *Eunidae* is tempting, since as Neil, *Knights*, *ad* 529, notes, the first song sounds very much like a parody of patriotic songs (see his cited parallels of drinking scolia), and we have Athenaeus' assertion (15. 698c) that Cratinus' *Eunidae* contained parody. Töpffer even suggested that *Knights* 524 parodies Cratinus's fragment 71 K-A from *Eunidae* (see Neil, *Knights*, *ad loc.*). Cratinus himself quotes a song of one of *his* predecessors, Ecphantides, an observation I owe to T. K. Hubbard, *The Mask of Comedy: Aristophanes and the Intertextual Parabasis* (Ithaca, 1991), 32 n. 70. Cratinus fr. 361a K-A: εὖιε κισσοχαῖτ' ἄναξ χαῖρ', ἔφασκ' Ἐκφαντίδης–'"Hail, Bacchic lord, ivy-crowned," as Ecphantides used to say' (= Ecphantides fr. 4 K-A). Ecphantides immediately precedes Cratinus in the list of comic victors at the City Dionysia: *IG* ii^2 2325, 49.

[26] Magnes' victories: Anon. de com. (*Proleg. de com.* III) 9 p. 7 and *IG* ii^2 2325, 44 (test. 3 and 4 K-A); useful discussion of the inscriptional record in Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb*^{2}, 190n, who even doubts (p. 191) whether Magnes' reported fragments are genuine, but gives no arguments.

[27] This play may even have lived on in the performing repertoire. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, 43-4, speculates that a now lost vase, the so-called 'Berlin Drinker'–Taplin's fig. 8 (= fig. 510 in M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater* [Princeton, 1961])–might show a scene from the *Wineflask*, but he admits this is a 'long shot'.

ἐπεισοδίῳ), and fragment 209 K-A mentions writing about Hyperbolus.[28] These may come from a scene showing Cratinus, the lead character in his own play, *writing* a comedy.[29] The old poet was not as out of touch as Aristophanes claimed.[30]

Interestingly, we hear nothing of this for Aristophanes. While the argument from silence is always perilous, I think it can be pressed into service here. If individual songs by Aristophanes had been alluded to by his contemporary comic competitors, those lines would very likely have been picked up by the scholiastic tradition. Whatever his musical gifts, Aristophanes does not seem to have made an impression by his individual songs but rather by the whole of his plays. When the democracy wishes to hear his advice in the *Frogs* again, they commission a reperformance of the whole; they do not just try to encourage more singing of bits of the play.[31]

We must note finally, if most speculatively, the continuing relationship between oral culture and the transmission of dramatic texts in antiquity. Initially, a dramatic text was intended for a single performance at one of the city's Dionysiac festivals. The poet, acting as *chorodidaskalos*, taught the lines to the chorus orally, as a well-known anecdote about Euripides tells us. Although it comes from as late a

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[28] See K-A *ad loc.* for attempts to emend fragment 208 K-A.

[29] Malcolm Heath, 'Aristophanes and his Rivals', *G&R*² 37 (1990), 143-58, offers a convincing reconstruction of some of the play's action (150-1).

[30] Platonius (*Proleg. ed com.* 1.29 ff. and 47 ff.; see K-A IV *ad loc.*) even saw in his *Odysseus & Co.* a forerunner of Middle Comedy, because it apparently lacked personal invective (*epitimesin*), although this notion says more about the teleological schemata of ancient scholarship than about Cratinus. See the proposed reconstruction of *Odysseus & Co.* and the critique of Platonios' claim in H.-G. Nesselrath, *Die attische mittlere Komödie* (Berlin, 1990), 236-40; cf. Heath, 'Rivals', 147-8.

[31] On the restaging see Alan Sommerstein, 'Kleophon and the restaging of *Frogs*', in *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis*, edd. Alan H. Sommerstein *et al.* (Bari, 1993), 461-76, and Dover, *Frogs*, 73-6. One very interesting speculation about Aristophanes' relation to popular song culture deserves mention here: B.B. Rogers, *The Knights of Aristophanes* (London, 1910), *ad* 973 ff. suggests that the reason Cleon is mentioned explicitly by name in line 976 (the only time he is so named) of that play is that Aristophanes hoped this little ode deriding Cleon might be picked up and popularly sung after the performance, just as Cratinus' songs had been. It is even more speculative to read anything into Aristophanes' apparent failure, but it may suggest that in the late 420s comedy was no longer a regular source of new, detachable song 'hits'. In discussion after this paper, Ruth Scodel suggested that the 'New Music' might be a key factor, and this is indeed plausible. As B. Zimmermann shows in 'Comedy's Criticism of Music', *Drama 2*: *Intertextualität in der griechisch-römischen Komödie*, edd. N.W. Slater and B. Zimmermann (Stuttgart, 1993), 39-50, Aristophanes adopted many of the features of the New Music, even as he criticised it; his songs might therefore have been much more difficult for amateur performers than the music of the previous generation.

source as Plutarch (*Moralia* 46b), it has a ring of authenticity to it. Euripides was singing the lines of one of his odes to the choristers (ὡς ὑπολέγοντος αὐτοῦ τοῖς χορευταῖς ᾠδήν τινα πεποιημένην ἐφ' ἁρμονίας), when one of them laughed at his performance. Euripides rebuked the man for being so uncultured as to laugh 'when I'm singing in the Mixolydian mode' (ἐμοῦ μιξολυδιστὶ ᾄδοντος).[32]

One would give a great deal to have explicit evidence for the interaction of poet and actor, but there is nothing. It is certainly possible in comedy that the actor contributed material and not just manner to the final performance.[33] Moreover, we must also reckon with the possibility that the poet himself performed as leading actor even as late as the time of Aristophanes.[34] The performance of comedy at the beginning of Aristophanes' career, then, was profoundly rooted in oral culture and oral transmission of poetic texts.

Eventually, however, comedy like tragedy became a repeatable and exportable commodity in which literacy must have played an increasingly important role. At first, comic performances from the city may simply have been repeated at the celebrations of the Rural Dionysia.[35] In this case, the actors who performed it in Athens could simply have taken the production on the road, although they presumably trained a local chorus. A poet could easily travel throughout Attica to train a new chorus, although the lead actor might have taken over this role. At a later point performances of comedy beyond the bounds of Attica began to take place, and it becomes increasingly unlikely that all the actors of an original Athenian production would remain together for all subsequent performances. The notion of a full text of the play in the possession of the lead actor or producer, used to teach new actors and choristers their parts, becomes ever more likely.

Here we have wandered almost completely into the realm of speculation, much of it shaped by what we know of touring players

[32] The word *hypolego* is rather rare but seems clearly to mean oral performance here.

[33] Stephen Halliwell, 'Authorial Collaboration in the Athenian Comic Theatre', *GRBS* 30 (1989), 515-28.

[34] See Cyril Bailey, 'Who Played Dicaeopolis?', in *Greek Poetry and Life*, edd. C. Bailey *et al.* (Oxford, 1936), 231-40 and Niall W. Slater, 'Aristophanes' Apprenticeship Again', *GRBS* 30 (1989), 67-82.

[35] One would give a great deal to be able to date this transition. On the basis of literary evidence alone, it is tempting to place it only after the Peloponnesian War: see Niall W. Slater, 'The Idea of the Actor', in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*, edd. J.J. Winkler and F.I. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1990), especially 394-5.

in Shakespeare's day. I alluded above to the performance of the *Thesmophoriazusae* which Oliver Taplin has identified on a South Italian vase. This performance could conceivably have been the equivalent of the state of affairs that lies behind the so-called 'bad quartos' of Shakespeare–or at least what we guess that to be: a single actor who has memorised not only his own part but enough of everyone else's to provide the foundation for a knock-off performance. Much more likely at this point in the early fourth century, however, is a written text in the possession of the company.

Later in the fourth century, Menander was clearly writing for the export market. Over a hundred titles of plays are securely attributed to him, yet in his roughly thirty years as a producing playwright he could only have premiered sixty of these in Athens–and even that assumes that he was allocated a slot at every festival without fail. Many of his plays then were clearly never intended for the Lenaia or City Dionysia to begin with. Menander presumably provided someone with a written text which the latter then produced, and it does not particularly matter whether that individual was an enterprising performer with an independent troupe or a festival entrepreneur at Delos or Delphi.

At this stage, the transmission of dramatic texts almost certainly relies on written texts and yet, beyond the initial point of sale, lies outside the control of the author. This is still very far from meaning, however, that drama itself is now essentially a written activity. Thomas makes the point that even when in the latter half of the fourth century Lycurgus legislates the preservation in the state archives of authorised texts of old tragedies, to which the performers in revivals must keep, the control mechanism is for the city clerk to read out the texts to the performers: the actors do not bring written texts to the archives for comparison.[36] We hear nothing of state copies of comedies, although there were eventually revivals of

[36] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 91 ff. The evidence is [Plutarch] *Life of Lycurgus* 841f, where among his measures is recorded this: καὶ τας τραγῳδίας αὐτῶν ἐν κοινῷ γραψαμένους φυλάττειν καὶ τὸν τῆς πόλεως γραμματέα παραναγιγνώσκειν τοῖς ὑποκρινουμένοις· οὐκ ἐξεῖναι γὰρ παρ' αὐτας ὑποκρίνεσθαι ('[He ordered them] to keep written copies of their tragedies on file and for the city clerk to read them out to the actors; for it was not permitted to act versions deviating from these'). While this detail (the clerk's oral dictation to the actors) does not in itself refute the notion of a bookseller's tradition of written texts, going back to the author's own copies, such as Donald Mastronarde believes in (see most recently his remarks in his edition of *Euripides: Phoenissae* [Cambridge, 1994], 39-40 and 40 n. 1), it does suggest the state was quite unwilling to rely upon private preservation of the text; moreover, if the state clerk dictates the text orally, it does not seem all that improbable that actors might have done so for booksellers too.

'old comedies'.[37] These presumably relied on the texts already in the hands of the acting companies–but here our speculations must end.

Old Comedy offers us evidence both for the reaction of Athenian society to literacy and for the effects of literacy on the form and transmission of comedy itself. Aristophanes and his contemporaries give us glimpses of a society in which literacy is a new, potentially powerful, and therefore somewhat threatening entity. The comedy of the oracle-seller and the decree-monger in the *Birds* are clearly in part motivated by anxieties about literacy and its consequences for political power, nor would the comedy be so vigorous, were the threat not perceived to be grounded in reality. Literacy did not by any means cause the decline of Old Comedy; the oral culture of popular comic poetry and its base in the symposia seem already to be eroding in Aristophanes' time. The end of Old Comedy is most closely bound up with the internationalisation of the genre. In search of a wider audience comedy simply abandoned its intimate relation with contemporary Athenian politics. In that internationalisation, however, literate transmission of comic texts was an increasingly essential component.[38]

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[37] The first epigraphic record of an old comedy produced outside the regular competition comes in 339, and by 311 production of an old comedy was a regular part of the festival: A.W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*² rev. J. Gould and D.M. Lewis (Oxford, 1988), 83.

[38] I am grateful to an anonymous referee for a number of salutary criticisms and to the editor and original audience for advice and encouragement. None but I bears responsibility for any errors which remain.

PROSE

CHAPTER SEVEN

WRITTEN AND SPOKEN IN THE FIRST SOPHISTIC

NEIL O'SULLIVAN

The world's first book culture developed in Athens in the second half of the fifth century: beyond the references to book-sellers and their stalls,[1] beyond the occasional casual reference to reading,[2] we find for the first time books used to characterise a person as being of a certain sort. Most famously perhaps with Euripides: the later references to his library (Athenaeus 3a; cf. Diogenes Laertius 2. 22) might well be based only on two passages in *Frogs* (943, 1409), but those passages are unambiguous not only in making him an avid reader and owner of books, but in presenting this trait as one which shows him in contrast to the older poet Aeschylus. The book is one of the characteristic features distinguishing the new poet from the old, and this motif was one of many which Hellenistic poets were to take over from Old Comedy's portrait of Euripides and use of themselves.[3]

Amongst the many influences producing a new attitude to the written word must be reckoned those teachers of Euripides, the Sophists.[4] It was natural that the Sophists would promote the book to a new status, given that they introduced a new standard of accuracy in dealing with language and the literature of the past. This aspect of the Sophists was well known to contemporaries, as Aristophanes' parodies show,[5] and even our scanty extant evidence

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[1] Eupolis 327 in *Poetae Comici Graeci*, edd. R. Kassel and C. Austin (Berlin and New York, 1983-)–hereafter K-A; Aristomenes 9 K-A; Theopompus 79 K-A; Nicophon 10. 4 K-A; Plato, *Apology* 26d-e.

[2] Euripides fr. 369 in *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*², ed. A. Nauck (Leipzig, 1889); Aristophanes, *Frogs* 52 f.; and Pl. Com. 189. 1-3 K-A. We should note too the appearance of readers on fifth-century vases: H.R. Immerwahr, 'Book Rolls on Attic Vases', in *Classical Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of Berthold Louis Ullman*, ed. C. Henderson Jr., 1 (Rome, 1964), 17-48.

[3] For the book as a poetic symbol in this context see P. Bing, *The Well-Read Muse. Present and Past in Callimachus and the Hellenistic Poets* (*Hypomnemata*: 90) (Göttingen, 1988), 10-48; many parallels between the language of Callimachean literary criticism and that in Aristophanes' *Frogs* are listed by W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom* (*Hermes Einzelschrift*: 16) (Weisbaden, 1960), 115 n. 1.

[4] There is explicit testimony on their relationship in Diogenes Laertius 9. 54 (Protagoras), Aulus Gellius 15. 20. 4 (Prodicus), and *Vita Euripidis* 10 Méridier (both).

[5] Note above all *Clouds* 658 ff.

testifies to such matters as Protagoras' interest in the correct genders of nouns and moods of verbs, Prodicus' views on the distinction of synonyms (mercilessly parodied by Plato) and Hippias' study of orthography.[6] All of these imply a new attitude to language which can only be fully satisfied by the use of something more reliable than human memory.

But it is perhaps in the overwhelming preference for prose which the Sophists exhibit which did most to promote the book as the necessary medium for the permanent recording of their thoughts. Amongst all the prose fragments, and all the prose books attested for the Sophists, there is only one single unambiguous mention of a poem–and that a short one–attributed to a man everyone would be happy to acknowledge as a Sophist: this is the epigrammatic elegy on the drowned chorus of Messenian boys composed by Hippias (B 1 D-K–the usual attribution to him of further poetry goes beyond any clear evidence).[7] There are of course a number of poetic fragments extant from Critias (even if we exclude those dramatic fragments which may be by Euripides), but he is not a character who is undeniably a Sophist–see, for instance the discussion of Kerferd.[8] We come here to a point to which I shall return, and that is the extent to which the standard collection of Sophists' fragments, at the end of Diels' and Kranz's *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, may actually impede our understanding of this group of intellectuals. Later I shall complain of absences from this modern-day canon, but here I would suggest that, by including Critias, Diels may have

[6] Protagoras A 28 f. in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*[6], edd. H. Diels and W. Kranz (Berlin, 1951-2)–hereafter D-K; Prodicus A 13-19 (mostly from Plato), B 4 D-K; and Hippias A 11-12 D-K.

[7] The basis of the attribution is Plato, *Hippias Minor* 368c-d, where the Sophist is said to have arrived at Olympia ποιήματα ἔχων . . . καὶ ἔπη καὶ τραγῳδίας καὶ διθυράμβους ('with poems . . . epics, tragedies, and dithyrambs'), but these poems (unlike the items of clothing mentioned before) are not specifically said to be Hippias' own work, and the emphasis is laid on his technical knowledge of the poetry–'rhythm and harmony and orthography'–so that an equally valid interpretation of the passage would be that Hippias had come to expound other people's poetry. We know that he did this on other occasions (Plato, *Protagoras* 347a-b, *Hippias Minor* 363a-b), and he seems to have produced the first anthology of others' works (B 4 [?] and 6 D-K).

[8] *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge, 1981), 52-3; cf. W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 3 (Cambridge, 1969), 301: 'Critias was not of course a Sophist in the full sense of a paid teacher'. 'Sophist' is admittedly not easy to define, but any definition which allows in those who were not professional teachers (an essential feature of the word's meaning since Plato at the latest) seems unsatisfactorily broad. If we include Critias, why not Euripides and Thucydides?

admitted an interloper, whose extensive poetic composition is in fact further evidence of his non-Sophistic status.

The Sophists' relationship to the poets, the traditional teachers of Greece, is not a simple one and would repay considerably more study. Let me just touch on a couple of relevant points here. Although rejecting the mode of communication the poets had adopted, and although subjecting them to searching and hostile criticism, the Sophists also seem to have imagined themselves as their successors. According to Plato, Protagoras identified Homer and Hesiod as Sophists (*Protagoras* 316d)–and indeed he was not alone in this in the fifth century (see Cratinus 2 K-A). Not only can several Homeric echoes be detected in the remains of the Sophists, but we know that they dressed in the purple robes of the the rhapsodes, appeared at the same festivals as they did, and composed speeches and dialogues featuring the characters of the Homeric epics.[9] There is a real sense in which they seem to be presenting their prose as the successor to the poetry of traditional Greek culture, and in this they pre-figure the dominance prose was to achieve in the fourth century. But to achieve this they had to adopt the book as their symbol.

That is not putting it too strongly, for two important contemporary or near-contemporary sources present the book as the special feature of particular Sophists. We look first at Aristophanes 506 K-A:

> τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρ' ἢ βιβλίον διέφθορεν
> ἢ Πρόδικος ἢ τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν εἷς γέ τις.
> A book or Prodicus or some babbler has destroyed this fellow.

As Pfeiffer[10] says about this fragment, Prodicus is specifically put on par with a book. Notice too that there seems to be a certain sort of language which matches the language of the book: we have a 'babbler', an ἀδολεσχής, a word which crops up several times in fifth-century discussions of philosophical or Sophistic language.[11]

The other important equation of a Sophist with a book is found in Plato's presentation of the arguments of Protagoras in *Theaetetus*. What is particularly interesting about this from our viewpoint is that,

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[9] The evidence for these claims is collected in N. O'Sullivan, *Alcidamas, Aristophanes and the Beginnings of Greek Stylistic Theory* (*Hermes Einzelschrift*: 60) (Stuttgart, 1992), 66-7 with notes.

[10] *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), 30.

[11] Aristophanes, *Clouds* 1480, 1485, and Eupolis 386 and 388 K-A.

instead of presenting the Sophist as actually present in the dialogue as he usually does, Plato shows him as only present as a book. That is to say, the actual participants in the dialogue can only debate amongst themselves what arguments Protagoras could have used to defend his famous dictum that 'Man is the measure of all things': Plato's well-known arguments about the inferiority of the written word in the search for truth are graphically presented here, for the absence of the author of the ideas reported means that no real discussion of his arguments is possible.

It is worth spending a bit more time on this presentation of Protagoras in written terms. One of Plato's wicked jokes hinges on our recognition of the standard way in which oracles were declaimed from the temple at Delphi when he says that Protagoras' unsupported claims come forth 'from the inner sanctum of his book' (*Theaetetus* 162a); we are not only reminded that it was a common and ridiculed practice to collect oracles in book-form (recall the famous oracular book scene from Aristophanes' *Birds* 959 ff.), but also that the one behaving just like a collector of these oracles was none other than the great atheistic (in ancient terminology)[12] philosopher himself, Protagoras. Plato may not have been the first to make this rather incongruous little joke about Protagoras and prophecy: perhaps the reference to some protégés of the Clouds in *Clouds* 332 as Θουριομάντεις ('Thurian seers') should be understood as a reference to Protagoras and his role as law-giver to the pan-Hellenic colony of Thurium.[13]

[12] Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 14. 3. 7; we might rather regard him as an 'agnostic', but the word is a nineteenth-century coinage, and it is perhaps doubtful how real most in the ancient world would have regarded the distinction between our concepts of 'atheism' and 'agnosticism' (cf. Diogenes Oenoanda, fr. 12 col. 2 [= 80 A 23 D-K]).

[13] See 'Pericles and Protagoras', *G&R*[2] 42 (1995), 15-18. P.A. Stadter, 'Pericles Among the Intellectuals', *ICS* 16 (1991), 114, has recently attempted to cast doubt on the reliability of the report in Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 150 Wehrli) that Protagoras wrote the laws for the settlement; his only reason for doing so is that 'Diodorus speaks at great length of Charondas as the lawgiver'. But he ignores two pertinent facts mentioned in Wehrli's commentary on the passage which strengthen its plausibility: first, that the report is actually at odds with Heraclides' usual picture of early philosophers as exponents of the contemplative life (and thus unlikely to have been made up by him) and, second, that the Sophist's *floruit* as given by Apollodorus (244 fr. 71 Jacoby) must indicate that the latter also accepted Protagoras' role in the foundation of Thurium. Furthermore, Stadter ignores the fact that Diodorus' attribution of the laws to Charondas cannot possibly be right: it has long been recognised that this lawgiver does not belong in the fifth century (as was already shown by Bentley in his *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris* [London, 1699], 362-5).

Let me add a couple of further considerations, perhaps of questionable historicity, which suggest a particular association between Protagoras and the written word as the favoured medium of his expression. A late source (Diogenes Laertius 9. 50) explicitly tells us that both Protagoras and Prodicus made money by 'reading out' (ἀναγινώσκοντες) their works in public. Perhaps not much weight can be put on details like this, but it is interesting to note that the tradition nowhere ascribes this activity to any other Sophist.[14] Secondly, I would draw attention to the famous story found in several accounts of Protagoras (A 1, 3-4 D-K) that his books were collected and publicly burnt because of their atheistic content. The historicity of this has been called into question by Dover in a very interesting article[15] on intellectual freedom in fifth-century Athens–the importance of this question for our understanding both of literacy and of tolerance in the Golden Age of Athens can scarcely be overestimated. Dover's argument is that the rather late sources for this claim have misinterpreted the report in Timon of Phlius (779 *Supplementum Hellenisticum* = 80 A 12 D-K), that the Athenians 'wanted to turn his writings into ashes', as the account of an actual historic event. This explanation seems to me far from compelling, but even if we accept it we are still left with the claim of Timon. Writing perhaps only a century after the events mentioned, even according to Dover's view Timon is at least recording some kernel of historical truth: that is to say, there was (in whatever way expressed) a desire amongst contemporaries to burn the works of Protagoras. That such a sentiment is without precedent in fifth-century Greece need not be seen as an argument against its historicity: rather, it is consistent with what we have seen so far about the Sophists and the book as their favoured means of communication.[16]

One final point I would like to explore in this context concerns the *Nachleben* of the written works of the Sophists and our knowledge of them. The list of titles found at the end of Diogenes Laertius' account of Protagoras was regarded by both Diels (on B 8 and B 8b) and Kranz (on A 1) as containing elements drawn not from any genuine list of Protagoras' works but rather from other literature, especially Plato. Thus the book title Περὶ τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ καταστάσεως

[14] *Pace* Pfeiffer, *History*, 31 n. 4, there is no evidence that Hippias' *Troikos dialogos* was actually *read* to his audiences.

[15] 'The Freedom of the Intellectual in Greek Society', *Talanta* 7 (1976), 24-54.

[16] On book burning in general see Dover, 'Freedom of the Intellectual', 34-6 and C.A. Forbes, 'Books for the Burning', *TAPhA* 67 (1936), 114-25.

(*On the Original Condition*), it is claimed, is simply an inference from the myth of the origins of human society which Plato puts into the mouth of the Sophist in *Protagoras*. I would like to suggest here that this is being too sceptical and that we have some reason to believe that these titles are genuine; consequently, we can rely on them as further strong evidence of the written works of the Sophists.

What basis could such lists have had in the ancient tradition concerning the Sophists? The answer which suggests itself is that the *Pinakes* of the Alexandrian library, compiled by Callimachus, almost certainly contained such information. As Pfeiffer said, the *Pinakes* were motivated by a desire 'to save the complete literary heritage of the past from oblivion and to make it a permanent and fruitful possession for all ages',[17] and it is only natural to think that the Sophists and their leading figure would have been represented in this universal catalogue. But we can go further and find clear evidence that such was indeed the case. An extant fragment of the *Pinakes* (431 Pfeiffer = 84 A 10 D-K) indicates that Callimachus did deal with the writings of the Sophist Prodicus and classified him as an orator rather than a philosopher. *A fortiori*, he must have listed the works of the more productive and famous Protagoras. And it seems to me that we can find further proof of this in the way the fragments of Protagoras have come down to us. Consider the transmission of his famous scepticism about the existence of the gods. Plato (*Theaetetus* 162d-e) alludes to it, but does not reproduce it, yet clearly it survived independently: Cicero (*De Natura Deorum* 1. 63 [= A 23 D-K]), Diogenes Laertius (9. 51 [= A 1 and B 4 D-K]), Eusebius (*Praeparatio Evangelica* 14. 3. 7 [= B 4 D-K]), and others all quote it, and these three also tell us that it occurred right at the beginning of a work. How did they know its wording as well as its position in the text? Eusebius admits that he has at best only second-hand knowledge of the work (Protagoras 'is said' to have begun his book thus), and it is highly unlikely (given the paucity of quotations from Protagoras in the ancient world to survive) that the others had seen copies of the book. It is much more likely that they derived their information, directly or otherwise, from the *Pinakes* of Callimachus. For we know that this catalogue contained the titles and openings of prose works as well as those in poetry.[18]

[17] *History*, 133; cf. 131: 'The intention was clearly to omit nothing from this inventory of the πᾶσα παιδεία'.

[18] Pfeiffer, *History*, 129, citing frags. 443, 444, and 449 with further literature.

So, given that we have reason to believe that Callimachus is ultimately behind the lists of Protagoras' writings, we should not be too sceptical about such lists. The poet's immense learning hardly needs demonstration, and we should remember that his task in the Alexandrian library was intensely practical: he wanted to compile lists of books already in place on the shelves, and he would have had no desire to invent further book titles on the basis of what he could deduce from Plato.[19] The *Pinakes* thus form an important link in the transmission of what we know about the written works of the Sophists; and while they can confirm the number and variety of the writings Sophists left behind, they also indicate that verbatim quotations in later sources are often based on (at best) second-hand reports.

So far, then, we have seen that the Sophists had a special relationship with the written word. Exact in their attitude to language and practising prose rather than poetry, they were identified by contemporaries with their books, the large number of which we should not doubt. And yet, as Protagoras himself was the first to tell us, there are two sides to every story (B 6a D-K), and I think it a mistake to lump all the Sophists together when it comes to assessing their use of books.[20] Although I have been happy enough to talk in general terms so far, it is time now to make some distinctions. When we look at the material presented to this point, we find that two figures keep appearing: they are Prodicus and Protagoras. They are the ones who care especially about exactness in language (ὀρθοέπεια and ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων),[21] who read out their works, who are identified with

[19] Thus Pfeiffer, *History*, 128, says that Callimachus' work 'was certainly based on his knowledge of the books available in the library'. When he goes on to qualify this with the statement that the poet 'also had regard to works only mentioned in earlier literature and to questions of authenticity' (ibid.), the citations of fragments he provides only give evidence for the second of these concerns (naturally part of any thorough catalogue) in the ordinary *Pinakes*. The evidence Pfeiffer assembled under fr. 456 does indeed suggest mentions of works no longer extant, but this will have been in a special *Pinax* on the chronology of Athenian drama, explicitly distinguished from the ordinary catalogue by the *Suda*, s.v. Καλλίμαχος (2) (= Test. 1 Pfeiffer) and following a quite different plan (see Pfeiffer's notes on fr. 456).

[20] Cf. R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), 19-20; even Pfeiffer, *History*, 30-2, is not sufficiently discriminating in discussing this question.

[21] The two terms are to be distinguished: see Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, 3. 205. For a more detailed (and more speculative) discussion of the difference see C.J. Classen, 'The Study of Language Amongst Socrates' Contemporaries', *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations* 2 (1959), 33-49 (= *Id.* [ed.] *Sophistik* [*Wege der Forschung*: 187] [Darmstadt, 1976], 215-47).

books. No source ever explicitly attributes to either of them an interest in extemporaneous speaking. Other Sophists do not seem to share their enthusiasm for the written word to nearly the same extent, and in fact we find Prodicus under attack for his devotion to the fixed form of the written word by a contemporary Sophist. The story is told by Philostratus (*Vitae Sophistarum* 1 proem. = 82 A 24 D-K) that Gorgias ridiculed Prodicus because he delivered things which were 'stale and often repeated', while Gorgias relied on the inspiration of the moment (*kairos*). The 'stale and often repeated' thing Prodicus delivered was his famous story of the choice of Heracles; it must be stressed, in the light of a claim to the contrary,[22] that our ancient sources do not imply that there was any difference between the written and the orally delivered form of the story, and indeed the anecdote in Philostratus would hardly make sense if this were the case. Rather, we know that the Heracles myth circulated in written form,[23] and Gorgias' criticism must be directed against Prodicus' habit (known from elsewhere) of simply reading out his work.

Gorgias in contrast prided himself on his extemporary oratory, a habit of his well-attested from Plato (*Meno* 70b-c, *Gorgias* 447c) onwards. Perhaps his most famous display was during his epoch-making visit to Athens in 427, when he appeared in the theatre and invited anyone present to propose a theme for him to expound (A 1a D-K). Now just as we found that Prodicus' concern with exactness of diction coincided with his use of the written word even in public speaking, so too we see in Gorgias a similarity between oratorical practice and rhetorical theory. It seems no coincidence, for instance, that this champion of improvisation was also the first theorist to discuss the art of *kairos*, or the right moment (B 13 D-K).

On a deeper level we can see that profoundly different attitudes to language underlie the different practices of Gorgias and Prodicus. Prodicus' use of the written word and study of synonyms imply a belief that words really do carry exact meanings with them: ἥδομαι and εὐφραίνομαι, for instance, might be used identically in ordinary Greek for 'enjoy oneself',[24] but for Prodicus they actually conveyed–in a sense which seems to have nothing to do with actual

[22] T. Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore and London, 1991), 77.

[23] Philostratus, *Vitae Sophistarum* 1 proem., 84 B 1 f. D-K.

[24] Cf. Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 4 f.

usage–different ideas (A 13, 19 D-K). In other words, although he is not credited anywhere with the idea, Prodicus must have believed (like some of his contemporaries)[25] that words had a natural correctness about them: that is, they existed by nature, not by convention.

Gorgias of course disagreed with this: his sceptical views on the possibility of language conveying truth, expressing ideas which have become the tedious orthodoxy of literary studies in our own day, are well known and do not need to be rehearsed here: they find their clearest statement in the reports of his work *On Non-Existence* and in his *Encomium of Helen* (B 1-5, 11 D-K). (One is tempted to note that puns–with all their flaunting of verbal slippage–seem almost as common in the fragments of Gorgias and his followers as they do in the writings of modern deconstructionists.)[26] But if language was incapable of expressing truth, it was not therefore powerless: rather, its great strength was in the manipulation of the feelings of an audience. Again, such an approach goes hand-in-hand with a belief in the importance of extemporaneous speech and a study of *kairos*–language is not a fixed thing as it was for Prodicus, but rather must be flexible and adaptable to the changing conditions around it. The nexus of spontaneous utterance and emotional manipulation of the audience becomes very clear in the next generation of Sophists. Alcidamas, the great champion of extemporaneous speech, also sees oratory as more concerned with emotional impact than with conveying the truth.[27] As we will see further, the scanty fragments of the

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[25] This question is discussed at length in Plato's *Cratylus*. Classen, *Sophistik*, 231, regards this issue as 'quite distinct' from Prodicus' synonymic studies, despite the fact that Plato seems to regard them as closely related: at *Cratylus* 384b Socrates says that, had he heard Prodicus' more expensive lecture, he would know the truth 'about the correctness of words' (περὶ ὀνομάτων ὀρθότητος), and this only makes sense in the context if the lecture dealt with the same topics as Cratylus' claim about the ὀνόματος ὀρθότης (383a). Indeed this is not surprising: given that Prodicus does not seem to have based his apparently arbitrary distinctions on actual usage, it is hard to imagine to what other criterion he could appeal. Note however a possible exception–pointed out by Classen, *Sophistik*, 233–in his objection (in Plato, *Protagoras* 341a-b) to the use of *deinos* by itself to mean 'clever' by appealing to other uses of the word: since LSJ says that this particular usage occurs first in Herodotus 5. 23, it is possible that this is a period touch on Plato's part, recalling a time in the 430s when this really was a new application of the adjective.

[26] Cf. the different uses of *taxis* in *Helen* 14; see further O'Sullivan, *Alcidamas*, 19 n. 89.

[27] *On the Sophists* 3, 22 f., 34; cf. 12. His fragments are also highly suggestive of similar attitudes: see F. Solmsen, 'Drei Reconstructionen zur antiken Rhetorik und Poetik', *Hermes* 67 (1932), 136-7.

fifth-century Sophists yield far more when seen in context with important documents which the arbitrary cut-off point of Socrates' death has excluded from the standard collection.

Before going on to look at those later manifestations of ideas present in the fifth century, we can spend a bit more time on fifth-century phenomena themselves. We have seen that Gorgias ridiculed Prodicus for endlessly repeating the same story at his recitations of the *Choice of Heracles.* We should not be surprised to find Prodicus getting his own back, and it says much for the importance of this written/spoken division amongst the early Sophists that Prodicus' attack on Gorgias also revolves on this difference. This time our source is Plato: at *Phaedrus* 267b he says that Gorgias and Tisias have discovered 'verbal concision and unlimited expansion on any subject'. This time Prodicus can laugh; Plato goes on to say that, when he heard this claim, he said that what was needed was neither long nor short speeches but ones of moderate size. Now the ability to be concise and expansive according to circumstances is specifically mentioned by Gorgias' pupil Alcidamas (*On the Sophists* 23) as one of the advantages of the extemporaneous orator; we can thus see that Prodicus' rejection of this skill is part of his preference for the prepared, the written word.[28]

Gorgias was famous not only for his ability at extemporaneous speeches, but also for the style of those speeches. They were unashamedly of the grand, poetic, emotive style, as ancient critics at least as early as Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 3. 3) acknowledged. I would argue that this combination of off-the-cuff speaking and grandeur is no coincidence, but of the essence of early perceptions of stylistic difference. Unfortunately, we have no ancient stylistic judgements on Prodicus' work, and really no verbatim quotations at all, so we are unable to form any judgement of the style he adopted. But what really confirms the stylistic importance of the written/spoken division as far as I can see is the well-attested history of this connection in the early fourth century. Before I can continue, it is time to consider the Diels-Kranz collection and suggest once again that it can be highly misleading in the sort of picture of intellectual life which it presents.

Already I have suggested that the dubious inclusion of Critias

[28] Plato, *Protagoras* 334e-35a has Socrates claim that Protagoras has the reputation for ability to speak at any length on a subject, but the Sophist never claims this himself, and his refusal to play along (following his suggestion that Socrates wants him to give an answer 'shorter than the subject demands' [βραχύτερα . . . ἢ δεῖ, 334d]) might indicate his rejection of the practice here ascribed to him.

amongst the fragments of the Sophists can mislead us about their activities. But my next criticism is more radical and raises deeper issues, I think. No one could deny the importance of Socrates in the history of philosophy: the term 'pre-Socratic' may be nineteenth-century, but at least as early as Cicero Socrates was seen as marking a turning point and a new beginning and in some sense even as the 'father of philosophy'.[29] The Hegelian tendencies of German historians of philosophy have strengthened his hold on that position. But the death of Socrates, whatever its importance from some viewpoints, is quite arbitrary from others, and in the case of the Sophists it imposes a cut-off point which is detrimental to our understanding of the whole intellectual context of the movement. This is where our basic source-book has been misleading: drawing the line where it does, it inevitably suggests that this is where the First Sophistic ends. And there is simply no other book which contains all the fragments of the fourth-century Sophists: Radermacher's *Artium Scriptores* (Vienna, 1951) contains much, but excludes anything which is not specifically to do with rhetoric.

The upshot of this is that most modern books about the Sophists treat them essentially the same way as Diels and Kranz: as a sort of prelude to Plato. Fourth-century figures are usually ignored. Alcidamas, as much a Sophist as anyone from the fifth century, is mentioned only in passing in the standard handbooks on the Sophists written by Kerferd, Untersteiner, and de Romilly.[30] What is perhaps worse, more recent editions of the fragments of the Sophists, without any brief to draw the line at Socrates, have usually contented themselves with presenting the same figures as Diels and Kranz do;[31] the clear implication of these collections of primary sources is that the Sophists were an exclusively fifth-century phenomenon.

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[29] *De Finibus* 2. 1; cf. *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5. 10 and *Academica* 1. 15.

[30] Kerferd, *Movement*, 68, 156; M. Untersteiner, *The Sophists* (Oxford, 1954), 94, 341; and J. de Romilly, *The Great Sophists in Periclean Athens* (Oxford, 1992), 61 (as her title indicates, she regards the movement as belonging to 'the second half of the fifth century'). An honourable exception is Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, especially 3. 311-13.

[31] See especially M. Untersteiner, *I Sofisti, testimonianze e frammenti* (Florence, 1961-7)—a French translation of the second edition (with additions) has recently been published by A. Tordesillas (Paris, 1993); so too J.P. Dumont, *Les sophistes, fragments et témoignages* (Paris, 1969) is essentially a translation of the the relevant section of Diels-Kranz, as is *The Older Sophists*, ed. R.K. Sprague (Columbia, 1972). Although the latter has Antiphon re-edited and adds Euthydemus, she still remains in the fifth century.

One of the advantages of bringing Alcidamas into our account of the First Sophistic is that he illustrates more clearly elements that our sources only allow us to see through a glass darkly in the fifth-century Sophists. Aristotle and others criticise his grand style, yet he also defends extemporaneous oratory, and this apparently paradoxical state of affairs–which we have already seen with Gorgias–becomes clearer when we examine his controversy with another fourth-century Sophist, Isocrates. That controversy, it has recently been argued,[32] is as much stylistic as anything else: Alcidamas attacks the accuracy of the written style as essentially unconvincing, while it is this very quality that Isocrates prides himself on, even though he does not present styles according to the written/spoken dichotomy. Rather, for Isocrates, the style which is opposed to his is not the spoken style but simply the careless, artless style.

The contrast between the careful, written style and the emotional, extemporaneous one is implicitly there as early as Aristophanes: at *Knights* 347-50 the grandiloquent Cleon (whose oratory is likened to thunder at 626) abuses a rival for having to stay up at night drinking water and preparing his speech. That Aristophanes does indeed present stylistic differences between orators should not surprise us, for we are quite happy to accept that idea for his criticism of poets in *Frogs*. But the perceptions of poetic styles and of rhetorical styles in the fifth century have much in common,[33] and the written/spoken division plays a role in both–we recall the Euripidean fondness for books mentioned at the start of this chapter. The similarity may actually be due to the Sophists themselves: one of the very few certain sources for the critical language of Aristophanes' *Frogs* is Gorgias himself (1021, cf. B 24 D-K).[34]

In Aristotle the written/spoken division has become the basis of his stylistic analysis of prose. As in so many things, he does not seem to be consistent in the third book of the *Rhetoric*. The early chapters are highly critical of the prose of Gorgias and Alcidamas, and seem to assume that there is really only one acceptable prose style, a happy medium between poetry and flatness. However, by the time

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[32] C. Eucken, *Isokrates; Seine Positionen in der Auseinandersetzung mit den zeitgenössischen Philosophen* (Berlin and New York, 1983), 121-30. The point is expanded by O'Sullivan, *Alcidamas*, 42-62, and accepted by S. Usher in his review of O'Sullivan, *Alcidamas*, *CR*² 43 (1993), 436.

[33] See O'Sullivan, *Alcidamas*, 14-22.

[34] See further M. Pohlenz, 'Die Anfänge der griechischen Poetik', *NGG* (1920), 142-78 (= *Kleine Schriften* 2 [Hildesheim, 1965], 436-72).

we reach the twelfth chapter of the book, Aristotle is prepared to acknowledge two different styles, and they are named 'written' and 'competitive': the Sophists, having been rejected, have provided the cornerstone of the philosopher's analysis of rhetorical prose.[35] The written and the spoken, of such importance in the fifth century, continue be the framework as the world moves into an increasingly bookish Hellenistic age.

It is important to recognise the existence of both the written and the spoken elements in the intellectual world of the First Sophistic, and the tension that existed between them. Sophists have been associated with books in the past, but perhaps not enough emphasis has been put on the strong elements of traditional oral culture still discernible in some of our information about them. But we should of course expect that, being a transitional stage, the Sophistic movement contained within it the old and the new. The particular conflict that this led to in this sphere provided the world's first way of speaking of prose styles; but we will only see this clearly as part of the Sophistic movement's contribution to Greek culture if we free ourselves from the modern construction which excludes from consideration of them anything after Socrates.[36]

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[35] So too at *Rhetoric* 1408b11 f. where he allows compound words, epithets, and foreign words–the very things he had criticised in the prose of Gorgias and Alcidamas in 3. 3–to one speaking emotionally (παθητικῶς). On this contradiction in the *Rhetoric* see F. Wehrli in *Phyllobolia für P. von der Mühll* (Basel, 1946), 27.

[36] I am grateful to Professor Michael Gagarin for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ORALITY AND PLATO'S NARRATIVE DIALOGUES

HAROLD TARRANT

1. Characteristics of the Narrated Dialogue

The question which I wish to begin from is whether Plato consciously tried to imitate features of oral narrative when casting certain dialogues in narrative rather than in direct or dramatic form.[1] It is a reasonable expectation that such an author, living in a society where intellectual activity was still primarily oral, was able to make some passages sound like the kind of thing we do not expect from formal written literature. Naturally this is more in evidence where written literature contained little or nothing that could be seen as a precedent for Plato's project, so that even if he had not been striving to recreate the atmosphere of oral conversation or delivery, he would still have had mainly oral models to draw on. Certainly when writing the narrative dialogues he would have the example of other Socratic writers, but the genre was still new, and modelled essentially on the oral traditions concerning Socrates' more noteworthy activities. Again, when writing the dramatic dialogues he may have had no straightforward model at all (see below, section 3 *ad fin*), though it is in this context that he is supposed to have been inspired by the mimes of Sophron and other dramatic writing.[2]

[1] The investigation was initially prompted by the fact that narrative dialogues, other than *Republic* 2-10 (where the device of narration, so successful in Book 1, is virtually redundant), display a higher incidence of hiatus than is usual for dramatic dialogues. In fact if one ignores the formal *rheseis* in the *Symposium*, *Republic* 1, and *Protagoras* (since these regularly result in a lowering of the incidence of hiatus), the only dramatic dialogues with a higher rate of hiatus than *any* of these narrative works are *Hippias Major*, *Hippias Minor*, and (barely) *Meno*. To adopt a chronological explanation of this difference between narrative and dramatic works would not be popular and the only remaining alternative would appear to be that Plato chose a slightly different style when recording conversations in narrative form.

[2] Sophron, Diogenes Laertius 3. 18; Aristophanes and Sophron, anon. *Proleg. Plat. Phil.* 3; Alexamenus of Teos and Sophron, Athenaeus 505bc (Aristotle, fr. 72 in *Aristoteles, Fragmenta*, ed. V. Rose [Leipzig, 1886]); Alexamenus, Diogenes Laertius 3. 48; and Epicharmus, Diogenes Laertius 3. 9-17 (from Alcimus).

Though most earlier dialogues capture the freshness and spirit of an original Socratic conversation, laced on occasions with myths which would also pass as stories orally delivered, I would single out as passages that can only be imitating oral speech (i) the treatment of Protagoras' long *rhesis* in the *Protagoras*, where oral improvisation is imitated by the presentation of apparently prepared topics (myth or lecture-style)[3] divided by what appear to be less fluent link-passages (322d5-3c8, 324c5-5b4, and 326e2-7a4); and (ii) the myth of judgment in the *Gorgias* (523a-24a)[4] which is treated like a story being told to Callicles (523a1-3) and an old woman's story at that (527a5-6).[5] There are no real written models for such prose myths as these.[6]

The original books of Plato did their best to avoid being book-like. But the question we are asking particularly is whether the books

[3] Such prepared topics and stock ingredients are used by the sophists elsewhere in the dialogue, such as 334a-c on the relativity of what is beneficial, and parts of 337a-c (Prodicus) and 337c-e (Hippias). But the link passages are precisely the kind of thing which would be smoothed over in a written version of the speech if the impression of oral improvisation were not intended.

[4] It is interesting that of 21 sentences the first is introduced by the *gar* appropriate for starting a story, while nine are introduced by *oun*, particularly appropriate to a story with memorable inner logic.

[5] That Plato has Socrates adopt the persona of the story-teller is to have him drop the persona which belongs to the world of Socratic *literature*; the reader is given the expectation that something less formal will be presented *of the kind which he/she is used to hearing from old ladies*. Similarly, where Protagoras begins his long rhesis in the *Protagoras*, he begins with a story (*mythos*, 320c-2d), which is similarly presented as a pleasant and suitable way for the senior figure to address his juniors (320c). The specification of such performance conditions is of course something which more naturally accompanies oral literature, and where convention requires that the genre be used by an older person one is apt to view the genre as particularly dependent upon traditions, which are in this case likely to be oral–for it would have been the early fifth century when Protagoras had himself been in the position of junior person, attending to the stories of his seniors. It may be objected that Plato's story is likely to have been drawn from Protagoras' written work *Peri Tes En Arche Katastaseos*, known from Diogenes Laertius 9. 55; while this is possible, it does not prevent Plato from striving for a performance-like effect here: we have a 'Once upon a time' opening (ἦν γάρ ποτε χρόνος ὅτε, 320c8), simple sentence structure, etc. The myth proper is told without the intervention of vocatives, allowing the narrator to lapse into the time of the story, but as soon as the lessons to be learnt are brought in the vocatives come thick and fast, as if the message is reinforced if the speaker calls upon the listener by name.

[6] Note that when Socrates decides to create his own version of some of Aesop's fables in prison, he casts them in verse, using traditional stories which he 'had at the ready and knew' (*Phaedo* 61b). Surely this is not a reference to somebody taking a written prose text (which fortunately happened to be there in prison with him) which he *understood*, and then casting it in verse, but rather of his taking orally transmitted tales that he remembered, and recreating them in the natural literary form: verse.

in narrative form were more story-like than their counterparts in dramatic form. There are two ways in which they could be so: (i) the actual ways in which the principal discussion is presented could differ significantly, and (ii) the narration might embrace the reporting of background circumstances and *erga* which emerge in a manner typical of story-telling.

It is in fact remarkable that narrative and dramatic dialogues can differ so little in respect of the main conversation, though it is reported in the one case and given without embellishment in the other. Long stretches of even short narrated dialogues like the *Lysis* and *Charmides* can read in a way reminiscent of *Meno* or *Laches*. The replacement of a simple 'no' by *ouk ephe* ('no he said') is an alternative only available in the narrative dialogues, but it is used sparingly.[7] Still, there may be some point in noticing how a simple *ouk* for 'no' is used comparatively little in some narrative works,[8] and one might suspect that Plato is keen to preserve the narrative illusion here; he is possibly less keen to avoid the straight *nai* ('yes'), but certain dialogues use 'narrative alternatives' frequently.[9]

The most action-filled dialogues, omitting the *Symposium* which is not rich enough in question-and-answer dialogue to provide significant data, are the *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus*, which are extraordinarily high in the formulae which are only possible in narrative dialogues. The narrative of the *Protagoras* is vivid enough for Socrates *qua* narrator to be able to plunge us back into the same world as the introductory dialogue without demanding any words at all from the unnamed companion, (i) at 316a when referring to the addressee's opinion of Alcibiades in the second person, and (ii) at

[7] Three times each in the *Protagoras* (50% of negative response formulae) and *Euthydemus* (12%), once in *Republic* 1 (4%), and never in *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, *Parmenides*, and *Republic* 2-10.

[8] Once in the *Protagoras* (17% of negative response formulae), twice in the *Euthydemus* (8%), and never in *Lysis* or *Symposium*; which compares with once in *Parmenides*, twice in *Charmides* (8%) and in *Republic* 1 (9%), three times in *Phaedo* (10%), and eight times in *Republic* 2-10 (6%).

[9] Rates of *nai* (as opposed to other positive response formulae) for narrative dialogues are:

Charmides: 11 = 19%	*Euthydemus*: 9 = 16%	*Lysis*: 15 = 19%
Parmenides: 17 = 29%	*Phaedo*: 13 = 13%	*Protagoras*: 10 = 27%
Republic 1: 3 = 15%	*Republic* 2-10: 63 = 10%	*Symposium*: 3 = 17%

Rates of one-word narrative alternatives such as 'He agreed' are:

Charmides: 0	*Euthydemus*: 11 = 20%	*Lysis*: 2 = 2%
Parmenides: 0	*Phaedo*: 2 = 2 %	*Protagoras*: 11 = 30%
Republic 1: 1 = 1%	*Republic* 2-10: 0	*Symposium*: 1 = 6%

335a when he refers to 'this *tribon* here' (τοῦ τρίβωνος τουτουΐ). In the *Euthydemus* the frame-dialogue between Socrates and Crito intrudes regularly upon the narrative (275c5, 283a, 290e-3a, 303a4-b1, 304b6), and in such a way that one does not easily forget that the ironic narrator is talking to a friend well able to interpret his irony. The bulk of the *Republic*, which has ceased to make much use the narrative mode of presentation, does not use the exclusively narrative response forms at all, and the *Charmides*, though long recognised as a work which preserves the narrative allusion by the occasional vocative addressed to imaginary listener (at the beginning at least),[10] also fails to use them. Other works use them only sparingly. One is tempted to conclude that Plato employs them mainly where narration needs to be natural and vivid, and where the reader or listener needs to enter into the world of the narration as well as the world of the narrated story. Therefore I would suggest that narrative is at its most natural and vivid in the *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus*, where it is made plain that the conversation is related only shortly after events have occurred. It is still vivid in *Republic* 1 the day after Socrates' well known journey to the Piraeus had taken place–far too vivid for a man who has just led a ten-book discussion on alternative politics. It is more remote in the *Phaedo*, but the strength of the impression that the narrated conversation has made upon the narrator guarantees narrative power if not narrative pace; whereas the *Symposium*, though consciously distancing the telling of the story from the action, still tells an extraordinarily vivid and fast-moving story: something which may have more to do with the fact that the storyteller had had a rehearsal of his performance (172a, 173c), than with any special insights which he may have into the events.

2. Plato and Orality

In Plato oral and written communication are joined together in an uneasy marriage. It is true that his works are written. Yet they are modelled quite directly upon oral conversation or oral narrative. Moreover their written form is not evidence that their audience was expected to read them rather than hear them. In the introduction to

[10] 154b, 155c, and 155d. H. Thesleff, *Studies in Platonic Chronology* (Helsinki, 1982), 62. It is clear that we are at a point in the narrative where Socrates has to tell of his experiences *in a confiding manner*, telling the imaginary friend of how he feels when a lad like Charmides confronts him.

the *Theaetetus* Euclides arranges for Terpsion and himself to relax while a slave reenacts the Socratic drama, and this suggests at very least that the oral/aural presentation of such a work to an educated company was perfectly natural. It shows that Plato was able to envisage the author of such a drama being there to enjoy the reading rather than reading himself, experiencing the effect that the dialogue has on the listener. In this passive reliving of the authorial experience Euclides has lost the authorial control that he once had; expression and intonation, which can do so much to fill out the character of the participants and to colour the arguments, are left to an unnamed slave. The slave thus plays the strange role of a solo actor, giving animation to all parts of the drama in the presence of the playwright and his friend.

A similar situation may be envisaged for intellectual gatherings in the school of Plato during his later years. Though full of philosophic content, the dialogues become easier for a person less sensitive to literary niceties to read by (i) a sharp reduction in dramatic elements, (ii) the avoidance of long quasi-stichomythic exchanges between sharply contrasting characters such as might call for acting ability, and (iii) the elimination of such features as hiatus which might have made greater demands on the non-expert reader.[11] In the *Theaetetus* the slave simply reads aloud, while the author sinks into the audience, thus allowing the words and arguments themselves to have their own independent affect upon his friends and colleagues. In allowing the slave to read, he is allowing the book to speak for itself; in allowing the book to speak for itself he is testing its ability to be released into the public domain, and thus to speak to others as well.

The *Theaetetus*, I suspect, shows a more relaxed attitude to letting one's works speak for themselves than is found in the *Phaedrus*, in which the communicative power of the written word is, notoriously,

[11] One would like to add here the avoidance of those rhythms at the end of sentences which were characteristic of verse, but it has kindly been pointed out to me that such rhythms may indeed make the work *easier* for the slave to read. I do not believe that Plato's later policies on clausulae and hiatus were developed purely for 'performance' reasons, but even in the case of clausulae I believe that the new policy produces a more uniform prosaic texture, which replaces a policy encouraging a 'versy' reading at certain points: such as the opening of the *Republic* which is particularly rich in 'epic' clausulae. It would be more difficult for the reader without literary pretensions to appreciate the way in which rhythms could encourage variation in the reader's tone, and more desirable to have a uniform prosaic texture than to include verse rhythms that would sound incongruous when inexpertly read.

greatly inferior to that of oral teaching (274c-8b). Here the written word seemed to challenge its own validity: to undermine its own claims to be taken seriously. One may suspect a kind of nostalgia for the pre-literate society, and nagging doubts about the legitimacy of this powerful tool of writing: had the crime of Prometheus been repeated by Theuth? Should writing have been left undiscovered, and had its discovery and use opened up a whole Pandora's Box of problems for authors and audience alike? The *Phaedrus'* attitude to writing has attracted so much controversy that it is pointless to dwell on it here.[12]

Another place where Plato shows awareness of the problems which an author may experience is the introduction to the *Parmenides*. Zeno, who has been at the receiving end of some penetrating criticism from Socrates, explains that the work which he, its author, had just read, was not a work of high pretensions and exaggerated originality, written by a near forty-year old; it was the work of a much younger man, contentiously ridiculing those who ridiculed Parmenides, a work which he might have been too embarrassed to put into general circulation but for the fact that somebody had already stolen it and circulated it without his permission. Ideally he would rather be reading it and able to answer questions about its message than to have it circulate beyond the bounds of authorial control. Whatever historical truth one might imagine lying behind the story, it is certain that Plato understood this predicament sufficiently well to have thought a reference to it worth while. Mention of the mocking criticism that the single written work of Parmenides had encountered also reminds us of the danger of the written word.

With Plato's own earlier works it is easier to imagine him reading them himself like Zeno than handing them to a slave for

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[12] For some recent discussions see R. Burger, *Plato's* Phaedrus: *A Defense of a Philosophic Art of Writing* (Birmingham, Alabama, 1980); T.A. Szlezák, *Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie: Interpretationen zu den frühen und mittleren Dialogen* (Berlin and New York, 1985); K.M. Sayre, 'Plato's Dialogues in the Light of the *Seventh Letter*', in *Platonic Writings, Platonic Readings*, ed. C.L. Griswold (New York, 1988), 93-109; C. Griswold, *Self-Knowledge in Plato's* Phaedrus (New Haven, 1986), chap. 6; G.R.F. Ferrari, *Listening to the Cicadas: A Study of Plato's* Phaedrus (Cambridge, 1987), 204-22; and articles in *Understanding the Phaedrus. Proceedings of the II Symposium Platonicum*, ed. L. Rossetti (Sankt Augustin, 1992) by T.A. Szlesák, 'Was heisst "dem Logos zu Hilfe kommen"? Zur Struktur und Zielsetzung der Platonischen Dialoge', 93-107; M. Isnardi-Parente, '*Phdr.* 274c ss., o il discorse orale come autoelenchos', 108-21; M. Erler, 'Hilfe und Hintersinn. Isokrates *Panathenaikos* und die Schriftkritik im *Phaidros*', 122-37; R. Ferber, 'Warum hat Plato die "ungeschriebene Lehre" nicht geschrieben?', 138-55; and C. Gill, 'Dogmatic dialogue in *Phaedrus* 276-7?', 156-72.

delivery; Protagoras too had apparently read from his works in person.[13] If Plato had intended delivery by a single speaker, then that speaker needed to display a consciousness of the dramatic potential of the piece. How Plato would have reacted to others reading out his more youthful work, we cannot know, but we have to bear in mind that much philosophic prose-writing up to that point had been undertaken for the sake of self-advertisement: to interest others in what one had to offer, and to entice them into becoming one's pupils. One's oral teaching was what one wanted the reader to hear, one's written teaching little more than a provocative preview.[14] One would probably have to except the prolific writer Democritus,[15] but that will not seriously alter the overall picture. Early philosophic writers wrote in order to arouse admiration and curiosity; explanation was left for oral study, and that is why the Presocratics seem so extreme in their theses and so difficult to understand today. It is why writers like Isocrates (*Helen* 1-5) and the author of *On Ancient Medicine* complained slightly later about the trend towards overarching counterintuitive theses.

If written works could not explicitly teach one's oral message without making oral/aural studies irrelevant, they could at least be used for polemical purposes. Though Zeno had not himself published his early pro-monist and anti-pluralist work, by Plato's day it must have become normal to publish one's defences of other

[13] Diogenes Laertius 9.54: πρῶτον δὲ τῶν λόγων ἑαυτοῦ ἀνέγνω τὸν Περι θεῶν . . . ἀνέγνω δ' Ἀθήνησι.

[14] On the concentration of *ex cathedra* statements and dearth of argument in the remains of Anaxagoras' book see for instance Malcolm Schofield, *An Essay on Anaxagoras* (Cambridge, 1980). Looking back on *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. K. Robb (La Salle, 1983), I find it strange to observe just how much it was taken for granted that the chief task of the Presocratics was being conducted through their writing, even though they wrote so little. Even Eric Havelock, in his chapter 'The Linguistic Task of the Presocratics', *ibid.*, 7-82, can write '[the Presocratics] too are poised between literacy and nonliteracy. Their style of composition is a form of mediation between ear and eye. They expect an audience of listeners, yet look forward to a reception at the hands of readers.' He speaks of 'the role of an oral author which they feel called upon to play' (9). He distinguishes them from 'poets of the intermediate period' on the basis that 'they did not wish to please or entertain, but only to instruct' (12-13). Their serious purpose may go unquestioned, but surely it was not through their brief, cryptic, and often aphoristic writings that this instruction was to be achieved.

[15] Democritus, of course, whose thirteen tetralogies of writings (and more) were presumably not all authentic, may have been more inclined to commit himself to writing following the example of his compatriot and alleged teacher, the sophist Protagoras; but we cannot assume that the latter thought of himself as an author rather than a teacher.

intellectuals (such as Plato's *Apology*–surely known to Xenophon,[16] like other Socratic martyrdom literature) and one's attacks on the views or methods of others (such as the *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus*, the former assuredly known to Isocrates, the latter intended to correct him).[17] Some works needed to circulate in order to have their desired effect on informed public opinion. Initial qualms about loss of authorial control, together with a lack of precedents for the dramatic species of dialogue,[18] probably meant that Plato *originally* 'published' dialogues in narrative form,[19] so that he could retain some kind of control over the way the drama was presented.[20] The true 'dramatic' or 'direct' dialogue seems to have been Plato's own invention, and it is clear from the *Theaetetus* that it had not always been a familiar form.[21]

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[16] *Apology of Socrates* 1 makes remarks about Socratic trial-literature which fit Plato's work on the theme. One should also bear in mind the tradition in Diogenes Laertius 3. 34; cf. 2. 57 (partially reflected in Aulus Gellius, *NA* 14. 3) of Xenophon's and Plato's having written works in response to each other, including *Apology* and *Symposium*. In the case of *Republic* and *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon's work is clearly seen as being later.

[17] *Helen* 1, where the Plato referred to is above all the 'Socrates' of the *Protagoras* (just as the Antisthenes is that of the equally polemical, hence public, *Sathon*), and *Euthydemus* 304d-6d where the anonymous critic of eristic, who is carefully put in his place, is usually seen as Isocrates himself.

[18] Such remote and inexact precedents as Thucydides' Melian Dialogue or Sophron's *Mimes* would not *explain* the desire to publish Socratic Dialogues in dramatic form; we should have to search for actual Socratic dialogues whose writing *and publication* could be proved to have preceded the bulk of Plato's literary output.

[19] Note that I do not mean that the writing of narrative dialogues must in general antedate the writing of dramatic ones; as long as Plato only intended private readings in Socratic circles or later in his own school the need for the provision of a narrative setting (which could in any case have been informally provided) was less urgent. See further, sections 4-5.

[20] See the remarks of Thesleff, *Studies in Platonic Chronology*, 60, who regards it as 'almost certain that Plato did not "invent" the reported form of Socratic dialogue'. Note p. 63: 'a speech or a reported dialogue is better suited for publication in written form and for reading unprepared by a single person, than a dramatic piece. The narrative of the report gives the necessary hints regarding characters speaking in the dialogue, and the background; no performance or institutionalised dialectical situation is required.'

[21] The evidence is a papyrus presented by M. Haslam, 'Plato, Sophron and the Dramatic Dialogue', *BICS* 19 (1972), 17-38, and 'Treatise on Plato', *P.Oxy.* 45 (1977), 29-39. See further H. Tarrant, *Thrasyllan Platonism* (Ithaca, 1993), 103-7.

3. Narrative and Tradition

The inclination of oral cultures towards agent-focussed story-telling is well known.[22] A sequence of events will often be found valuable where it would have been rejected by an author working in a strictly literate society (as in early cosmogony, where the more important purpose is to explain the world as it now functions, not how it evolved);[23] agents may be introduced who will take roles in the argument. Such a sequence and the agents contributing to it are most obvious where a dialogue is developed out of a narrative. There is in fact no doubt that the narrative dialogues were closer to the powerful oral tradition that preserved the memory of Socrates. In the introductions to the only three works that are narrated by somebody other than Socrates there is a clear fascination with the way in which Socratic traditions were passed down. In the *Phaedo* the speaker was at least present at the events which he purports to narrate, but the setting is remote, and the distance covered by the tradition is more important than its preservation over time. In the *Symposium* and *Parmenides* the way in which traditions have survived seems to have become important. Is Plato just inventing a plausible pedigree for the versions which he intends to present, as he does, one might think, when introducing the Atlantis tale (*Timaeus* 20e ff.)? I think not; it would have had more impact simply to present his story, and features of the narrative actually undermine the claims of authenticity in the *Symposium*. It is Plato's purpose, I believe, that the reader should be immersed in the world of oral tradition.[24] The remoteness of the narration from the actual events is stressed in both cases by having the immediate narrator tell of what an intermediate

[22] See E.A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write* (New Haven and London, 1986), 76.

[23] It is interesting how the text-dependent, text-commenting society of late antiquity was conscious of this difference; Olympiodorus (*In Plat. Gorg.* 48) interprets the myth of the *Gorgias* (whose neo-oral features we have noted above) as describing two eternally existing states of affairs, even though Plato has the better one replacing the inferior one at Zeus' request.

[24] While Plato may be viewed as undercutting his own account of events, or other Socratic accounts of those same events reflected in Xenophon's *Symposium*, one should not see the introduction as in any way diminshing the authority of the content of the *Symposium*. Tradition is not something negative which corrupts historical truth (something Plato is never that interested in), but something exciting, capable of refining a story and sifting out what is really relevant from the Socratic perspective. In this context it is of course important that the story has undergone this process at the hands (or rather lips) of genuine devotees of Socrates with insights as to what it was about the person that was worth repeating for posterity.

narrator had said, and by placing the statements of the intermediate narrator in indirect speech, thus introducing an infinitive construction which constantly recurs and constantly reminds one of the remoteness of events.

The narrative of the *Parmenides* is given to one Cephalus of Clazomenae, who relates how they had actually sought out the story from one Antiphon who had learnt it from Pythodorus and practised hard at memorising it (126c). The narrative device disappears at 137c4, and the dialogue is left to conclude like a barely dramatised Eleatic book. This may indicate a change of plan, and my own studies strongly suggest that these later pages were penned after a measurable interval.[25] At any rate it is too atypical to be studied as a representative of narrative form.

The narrative of the *Symposium* is entrusted to Apollodorus, who has heard the story from Aristodemus. The former has apparently had some recent practice at remembering it (172a1, 173c1), but this is offset by the report of the tale's antiquity (172c) and the treatment of the intermediate narrator Aristodemus as somebody in the past (173b). Furthermore Aristodemus' memory is sometimes said to have failed him (178a2, 180c2, 223d1),[26] and Socrates, who had allegedly confirmed some details (173b), had apparently not filled in any of the gaps. There is no doubt that we have here been invited to enter the dreamy world of Socratic legend, the same world that lay behind Xenophon's related *Symposium* as well. Our written text clings with affection to a fundamentally oral culture of intellectual heroic tales.

In some ways the *Phaedo* is similar. Here one is impressed with the rapidity with which heroic legend has followed the death of Socrates. Yet in this case one cannot envisage a large part of the content having been successfully memorised, even by an eye- (or rather ear-) witness. The arguments are often tortuous, and the danger of losing one's thread too great. Various recurrent themes, such as the glimpses of a quasi-Orphic underworld or the intermittent surfacing of the Theory of Ideas, help to tie the work together like refrains. The early reference to the versification of Aesop prepares the way for the glimpse of Socrates as moralising myth-teller towards the

[25] In particular there is a wealth of middle-to-late period response formulae in the second part, but not in the earlier part, even though one might have expected the more 'literary' section to be richer in general. I hope to publish data in due course.

[26] Aristodemus ought also to have given a speech at some stage of the evening, but he seems conveniently to have forgotten this too!

end. The early reference to the listeners' mixture of pleasure and pain (59a) and Socrates' pleasurable release from pain as the shackles are removed (60b), point forward to the treatment of pleasure and pain as nuisances at 83b-84a, and to the pleasureless, painless death at the end.[27] One is confronted with compositional techniques that would have been employed in oral narrative, but which are now used rather to assist the reader's or listener's memory and to integrate his/her reading of the dialogue.

4. Testing for Orality

The *Phaedo* was not among those dialogues which I had singled out as being most likely to preserve the features of oral narrative. Those dialogues were *Protagoras*, *Euthydemus*, and *Symposium*. We appear now to require some signs which one should look for in a good imitation of oral narrative, and for the most part such signs will be the relics of mnemonic devices or of signals to the listener (who hears but once) of the completion of a narrative-segment. Such a requirement is wickedly difficult to meet, for the variety of oral literature is such that it goes some way to matching that of written literature. After all, one of the purposes of this paper is to show how written literature evolved slowly out of an oral literature, and bore the marks of an oral culture for some time. Nevertheless, after a warning to the reader of the speculative nature of this section, some attempt must be made.

One recognised feature of oral composition is the tendency to repeat something with variation.[28] Another, surely, is the rounding-off of episodes both short and long by 'ring-composition' which acts as a mnemonic tool for author or listener as well as a framing device. Another, less tangible and difficult to apply usefully, is the feeling of inner logic as the tale unfolds;[29] there will be narrative bones, motifemes perhaps, building a recognisable skeleton around which the flesh of the tale will cling. Written literature does of course have structure (Plato's works, after all, will always be written literature), but that structure has greater opportunity for complexity, and for

[27] The labyrinthine themes associated with Theseus and the minotaur are of course the subject of Ronna Burger's book, *The Phaedo: A Platonic Labyrinth* (New Haven, 1984).

[28] Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write*, 72-3, following Robert Alter.

[29] A requirement of myth which was demanded by Walter Burkert, *The Structure and History of Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, 1979), 5.

obscurity,[30] if it wishes to make the most of it. Oral narrative makes considerable use of conversations, allowing the narrator to show off dramatic performance skills;[31] but the conversations in performance may be expected to be flexibly presented, with little attempt at verbal accuracy.[32] Arguments will not seem to rely on a precise order of premises; little will depend, even in philosophy, on precise terminology.[33]

To take the *Symposium* first, one notes with satisfaction that its parts follow naturally upon one another. The speeches of the participants follow an order which has been predetermined by the arrangement of participants on the couches. Until Alcibiades and his friends intrude late in the action the work had followed this predictable (hence memorable) order except for Aristophanes and Eryximachus swapping places. While it was Aristophanes' hiccup which had entailed the change, their content meant that they were better placed like this. For Eryximachus' speech is a development of Pausanias', using in a new way (a way predictable from his profession) to characterise the distinction between the vulgar and the heavenly forms of Aphrodite and Eros. Later there will be much in Socrates' account of his own education with Diotima which mirrors his own cross-examination of Agathon shortly before. Later ideas grow out of and build upon earlier ones in a memorable fashion, and the whole sequence of speeches from Phaedrus to Socrates owes something to the theoretical sequence of advancement in beauty-education (210a-11c). The order seems natural and appropriate, but never forcibly imposed by strict theory; oral narrative has no need to be scientific.

The *Symposium* is rich in framing motifs which tie it together,

[30] One cannot resist referring to Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* in this context.

[31] Both my examples of Platonic myths with quasi-oral features (see above) contain reports of the words of others, *Protagoras* 320d7, 322c5-d5, and *Gorgias* 523b7-4a7.

[32] See Ruth Finnegan, *Literature and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (Oxford, 1988), 81: 'Surprisingly to one brought up in a literate culture, those without writing often have little idea of verbal accuracy.'

[33] Note that where a precise word is important it will be remarked upon, as at *Theaetetus* 201cd, where the interlocutor recalls a conversation which he has *heard*; cf. *Meno* 76cd, where Plato checks with Meno the precise terms used by Empedocles in a written poem, but reused by Gorgias and Meno orally thereafter, and 85b where the precise terminology used by geometrical experts, whether teaching or writing, is remarked upon. When recalling a written prose text a degree of accuracy will be achieved, even when it seems that no precision is promised, for example, *Theaetetus* 152a, quoting Protagoras.

particularly at the ends. These motifs begin in earnest not from the beginning of the work but *from the beginning of the narrative*. Aristodemus meets Socrates washed and slippered (signifying the start of something unusual, 174a); when all is over Socrates will wash at the Lyceum, signifying the start of just another day (223d). The picture of Aristodemus obediently following his master is developed at 174a-d, and recalled at the end of the dialogue. The meditating Socrates of 174d-5a is recalled by Alcibiades at 220c. The positioning of Socrates next to Agathon (175c) is almost restored at 222e-3b. Socrates is called a *hybristes* by Agathon at 175e, and treated as such by Alcibiades at 219c. A period of moderation on wine (176a-e) is terminated at 223b-c, with Socrates' ability to hold his alcohol being made clear at both these locations (176c, 123c). The dismissal of the flute-girl (176e) had already been made good at 212d. The plan to praise Eros (177a-d), already in suspension since 214cd, gives way to a plan to praise one's neighbour at 222e-3a. One need not go on and list all the various ways in which motifs appear and reappear so as to frame a portion of narrative. This list will suffice. But what we must observe is that however cleverly this framing technique is employed, it remains natural, using ideas rather than contrived words and phrases. The feeling of a oral/aural story persists, even though reason tells us that we are dealing with a literary composition in which that feeling is artificially generated.

In the *Euthydemus* the story begins from the beginning of the work and concludes at 304b. The dialogue continues beyond this, but what follows is a more serious reflection of issues which the narrative provokes. Though the question of the education of Crito's sons (306d-7c) is one which might be said to be foreshadowed at 272d2-3, it does not operate either as a refrain or as a framing motif. These are for the most part confined to the story, and must be seen as features of the story rather than as features of the dialogue.[34] The most obvious is that of the hyper-wisdom of the two sophists (271c-2d, 273c) which is picked up finally at 303c-4a; this is not surprising, as Crito had in fact invited Socrates to give an account of the nature of their wisdom (272d). Again, at 273c Socrates tells Cleinias about the brothers' earlier wisdom, assuming that it is the same today: he mentions their ability to teach (i) military arts and (ii) self-defence in

[34] One has to acknowledge that the logography theme and the *sophia* theme, on which see below, are picked up again at 305b-e, but they build on the themes of the narrative in a rather different way.

the law-courts (cf. 271d-2a: hoplomachy and forensic speech-writing). It transpires that both are far inferior to their present skills. It is then no accident that in searching for that branch of knowledge which will guarantee happiness by ensuring the correct use of other arts, Socrates' first quasi-serious suggestion is that it is the art of the speech-writer (289c), and his second the art of generalship (290b). As the brothers have found an art to crown their earlier skills, so Socrates and Cleinias search for an art that will transcend logography and military science. The ease of learning the sophists' art, foreshadowed at 272b, becomes evident at 298b and fosters criticism at 303e. The puzzles for others concerning knowledge with which they had begun at 275d had grown into problems for themselves too by 297ab. The rapturous applause of the sophists' followers, evident after their first 'success' (276b), has spread to the whole gymnasium at 303b, and in such a way as to remind one of Socrates' comparison between the eristic art and corybantic ritual (277de).

Thus what one sees in the *Euthydemus*, I submit, is again a natural framing technique, appropriate to oral narrative. The inner logic of the story's development is not difficult to grasp: in their ruthless pursuit of verbal victory the sophists, having initially been given the benefit of the doubt, have progressively been securing the condemnation of their present pursuit. Furthermore the episodes of the developing story are clearly marked off, not so much by ring-composition techniques as by changes in *prosopa*, subject, and manner of conversation. One would give a narrator less chance of remembering accurately the details of this story than those of the *Symposium*, but then here the narrator has also been a protagonist in the events described, and those events were very recent. The story-like character of the bulk of this work is less marked than that of the *Symposium*, but it still feels like the informal narration of events offered by one friend to another, as the ironic invocation of the Muses and Mnemosyne at 275d shows. Socrates and Crito *interact* like two long friends with an intimate understanding of the other's likes and dislikes, able to pick up those nuances and ironies in a way that cannot always be expected of the readers of the author-narrator.

And so to the *Protagoras*. The initial episode, in which Socrates converses with Hippocrates, is framed by (i) the enthusiasm for Protagoras initially demonstrated by the latter, and (ii) the contempt for all sophists exhibited by Callias' eunuch-doorkeeper. As in *Euthydemus* and *Symposium* a remote atmosphere is then created–an atmosphere of expectation–by some clever scene-setting, enriched

here by quotations from the underworld scenes of *Odyssey* 11 (315b9, 315c8). One refrain of the dialogue appears at 316c5, that of Promethean foresight, which will be amplified at 320d ff., and will resurface at 361d at the end of the work. Another such recurrent theme is that of Prodicus' distinctions between near-synonyms (337a-c, 340b, 358a, e), lurking menacingly in the background of a work intent on arguing that there is no distinction between five virtue-terms normally not regarded as at all synonymous. Once formally introduced the twin themes of the teachability of virtue (319a) and the unity of the virtues (329c), both of which relate to earlier material, remain with us (the former in the background, the latter openly) until the final paradox of 361a-c. One does need these ties in a work where one principal player is for ever trying to divert the course of the argument away from its natural conclusion. The story-like atmosphere is maintained here, as in the *Euthydemus*, by the reader's sympathy for one player in the struggle for a young man's soul, and, as in fairy-tale, the story does not end until some kind of victory has been achieved.

5. Parallels in the Dramatic Dialogues

It is not difficult, then, to see Plato as having been keen to preserve the atmosphere of oral story-telling when writing works like these. One could argue that similar factors apply to *Charmides*, *Lysis*, *Phaedo*, and *Republic* 1. The problem is that one could argue that they also apply to some dramatic dialogues. Take the way in which the fundamental question of the teachability of virtue binds the *Meno* into a unity, or the term *kalon* binds the *Hippias Major* from the third word until the fourth from the end, or the atmosphere of Socrates' immanent trial pervades *Euthyphro* from first to last. Or the way in which Meno's connections with Gorgias recur like a refrain (*Meno* 71cd, 73c, 76b-d, 95c, 96d), or the celebrated *alter ego* (*Hippias Major* 287c etc., 292c ff., 298d ff., 303d-4e), or the comparison between Socratic arguments and Daedalus' statues (*Euthyphro* 11b-e, 15b); and one might here add the 'midwifery' theme in the *Theaetetus* (148e ff., 157c, 184b, 210b-c). In spite of the non-appearance of the narrator, dramatic dialogues may develop in a manner which preserves a debt to the oral communication of the Socratic story. To be sure there are works in the corpus which would have made an awful story, such as *Laws* or *Sophist*. They lack the atmosphere of struggle,

the feeling of momentum; they lack memorability, entertainment value, rapport between performer and audience. But there are many others which develop in a story-like fashion and could have been performed by a solo actor, far more so than Books 2 to 10 of the *Republic*. These works use the same techniques as narrated dialogues except for the absence of the narration itself. The dramatic *Laches*, I submit, is more performable than its narrated sister-dialogue the *Charmides*, and probably uses the interweaving of recurrent themes more skilfully; it could be epitomised as a more effective story than could *Charmides*. The feeling of rapid progress towards an inevitable goal is enhanced by Nicias' prophetic warning about what happens to Socrates' interlocutors at 187e-8b. The ease with which one reacts to the *Laches* as a story from Socratic legend is in part due to the greater momentum which the work generates, momentum which compares well with that of *Republic* 1 or *Protagoras*.

Thus, in the end, one is at a loss to show how narrative dialogues make a greater attempt to capture those story-like qualities characteristic of oral Socratic tales than some of the dramatic dialogues, except in regard to those devices which by their very nature are unique to narrative dialogues: the repeated 'I said' and 'he said' etc., and the occasional address to the imaginary recipient of the tale. Unless some keener scholar can discover traces of oral narrative of a more fundamental kind exclusively in the narrative dialogues, then Plato was not necessarily more dedicated to preserving the atmosphere of the oral story within his dialogue-stories than within his dialogues-proper. Such a conclusion seems disappointing, but it should be remembered that only some of the dramatic dialogues can compete in these story-like qualities, and all obvious cases would be among the dialogues generally supposed to have been earlier. Let us recall that Plato may at first have acted as performer, reading out such works in person. In these circumstances there is every opportunity for the author to put the dialogue in an appropriate setting when introducing it, and hence to *turn it into a story*. Only if one is allowing the work to circulate does the narration itself have to be provided in written form.

Here, I will tentatively suggest, lies the chief difference between the *Laches* and the *Charmides*. The former was serious enough philosophy and perhaps contained more obvious lessons on the nature of virtue than the latter, but nothing dictated that it should be allowed to circulate. The latter however was more provocative; dealing with Charmides and Critias, it was crucial to the way in which

Socrates' activities were to be viewed, hence crucial to the public image of philosophy. It sets out to seduce readers, first by the atmosphere of sexual attraction, then by the *tour de force* in argument.[35] The readers of the *Laches* are intrigued by the clash of personalities which soon surfaces between the two generals, but they will be excited rather by the philosophic issue itself; they are already expected to be dedicated hearers of Socratic discussions, and it is assumed that they believe that virtue should be acquired: hence their interest in how it is to be acquired, as in the *Meno*. In this case there was less reason to allow it to reach an audience beyond Plato's immediate circle, and less likelihood that the public at large would be keen readers. Nor was there any attempt by the author to turn the *Laches* into a written *epideixis*, or display-piece.

Again, to circulate the *Euthyphro* and the *Gorgias*, with their potentially worrying attitudes to religion and politics, might have been dangerous; less is offered for the entertainment of uncommitted readers, and this is generally true of even the most attractive early dramatic dialogues. It is the narrative dialogues which make the clearest effort to draw the outside reader in, *Lysis*, *Protagoras*, *Symposium*, *Euthydemus*, and *Charmides*.[36] The *Phaedo* and *Republic* 1 do so less obviously, but there is still a great deal of interest in their early pages besides philosophy. There are good reasons why all the narrative dialogues should have gone into circulation early, and some indication that (i) *Protagoras* at least was known to Isocrates, while (ii) *Euthydemus* is intended as a reply to Isocrates (see note 16). The later *Phaedrus* is perhaps the only dramatic dialogue to compete in seducing the non-philosophic reader. Some dramatic dialogues, assuming a dedicated or at least inquisitive reader, plunge into a philosophic discussion from the beginning, notably *Cratylus*, *Meno*, *Gorgias* (almost), and *Hippias Minor*, as well as most late works.[37]

Thus I shall offer the suggestion that the difference between narrative dialogues and 'early' dramatic dialogues is analogous to that between concertos which are provided with cadenzas by the author and those which are not. It is not a question of cadenzas never

[35] In both these respects one might profitably compare *Protagoras* and *Lysis*.

[36] One notes that the erotic interest is also present in the narrated *Erastae*; if this is not a sign that Plato wrote it, it suggests that whoever did write it was aware that narration and erotic interest tended to go together in Plato. The spurious dialogues normally favour dramatic dialogue.

[37] I concede that the *Meno* might have been little less seductive had it been provided with an appropriate framing narrative.

having been intended, but merely one of the author's failure to record any in writing–though he would actually have played some if performing the concerto in person. So too the *Laches* and the *Meno*, not to mention the *Gorgias*, which needs a narrative (i) to clarify the speakers of the opening scene, and (ii) to explain what is happening at 447c where a scene-change is sometimes postulated,[38] were not intended to be without a narration. Rather the author provided the framework for the story himself without any feeling of the need that it should be written, until such time as he began to question the value of narrative settings anyway. By the time of the *Phaedrus* Plato has developed the technique of developing an atmosphere for the dialogue and characters for the participants without recourse to narration, and since it is the *Phaedrus* which is so conscious of the need to ensure that semi-serious writings should not be taken too seriously, it is quite likely that it was in this period that he had begun to release dramatic dialogues not originally intended for that purpose. Already, perhaps, works like the *Gorgias*, *Cratylus*, and *Theaetetus* had grown to a point where it would have been difficult to preserve the illusion of a live narrator communicating the story to us in person, and much of the narrative setting would have been as redundant as in Books 2 to 10 of the *Republic*. Besides, his readership was now looking less for Socratic legend and more for a philosophy. Dialogues increasingly needed to be presented in dramatic form, as all the late dialogues were.

6. Conclusion

This study began in search of a more obvious debt to oral narrative in Plato's narrated dialogues. Such a search fails chiefly because the qualities which appear most relevant also belong to some of the dramatic dialogues. We have suggested that these works were intended for personal narrative presentation, but owing to the fact that 'publication' was not the aim when they were originally written, no *written* narrative frame was provided. Their release, sometimes, as I shall some time argue, with revisions, dated from a time where the interest in narrative had declined.

The Platonist knows that aporetic conclusions are not necessari-

[38] On these features of the *Gorgias* see Thesleff, *Studies in Platonic Chronology*, 86-7.

ly the product of unfruitful discussions. Examination of narrative dialogue in the context of the imitation of oral narrative has led us upon some important paths, and been able to suggest how Plato's publication-tactics may have changed. The change in publication tactics was itself intimately linked with the way in which intellectual life was becoming less dependent on the role of a story-teller. Even in the fourth century it is essential to remember that literary creation and presentation was not governed by publication practices appropriate for a fully literate society.

CHAPTER NINE

ORAL XENOPHON

DOUGLAS KELLY

In 1966 the Oxford philosopher Gilbert Ryle published what he referred to, or what was referred to, as his 'naughty book', *Plato's Progress.*[1] In this book Ryle put forward, to account for certain changes over time in the matter and manner of Plato's dialogues, the theory that some time in the 370s Plato was deterred from publishing further eristic dialogues by a successful prosecution of Plato and some of his associates for 'defamation of some senior persons of social and political importance'. This is not the place to discuss Ryle's reconstruction of Plato's life history, which, whatever light it may throw on Plato's philosophical development and practice, lacks any visible grounding in what can be known about the working of the Athenian legal system. In particular, the 'court order . . . forbidding Plato to teach eristic to the under-thirties' that Ryle postulates is an imaginative interpolation from modern common-law practice.[2]

Ryle is invoked here for another reason. His highly original enquiry into the reality of Plato's life behind the *Dialogues*[3] raised sharply some questions about what can be meant by the term 'publication' as applied to literary works in the context of fourth-century Athens. This is a subject upon which a certain degree of vagueness has become habitual. Thus few would see any need to go beyond George Kennedy's simple formulation: orators 'publish' their works, yet nothing is said of how a text passes from author to user, or about what the new owner of a book, or a borrower, was meant to do with

[1] This comes from oral tradition and so should not have a footnote.

[2] G. Ryle, *Plato's Progress* (Cambridge, 1966), 146-92: the 'crisis'; 172: 'the court order'. Yet one will search in vain for such a thing in J.H. Lipsius, *Das attische Recht und Rechtsverfahren* (Leipzig, 1905 and 1912). Xenophon's story that Kritias and Charikles ordered Socrates to stop conversing with young men (*Memorabilia* 1. 2. 32-8) presupposes, whatever its veracity, the arbitrary abuse of power by the 'Thirty' and is no evidence for regular Athenian procedure, though it seems to have had some effect on Isocrates' inspiration for his *Antidosis* and perhaps even on Ryle's hypothesis.

[3] Ryle, *Plato's Progress*, 21-54.

it.[4] What is done with the book once it has been handed over is a question left unposed. Yet in pursuing the question of what the publication of dialogues might have actually consisted of in Plato's case, Ryle pointed to a number of possible outcomes of the writer's allowing a copy, or the copy, of his manuscript to pass into another's possession. For one, the person now in possession of the text might take it away and read it, or have it read to him by a slave on his own. Or else the possessor of the text might read it (or have it read) in the company of friends or others drawn together by interest in the work. A further possibility is that the author himself might read his work to a group of listeners and that, following upon this reading, there could be a discussion of the work between the author and the company.

It will be seen that the possibilities being canvassed here refer to the private world of the philosophical dialogue, to which our Platonic evidence mainly refers, although the setting of Plato's *Phaedros* shows that even a particular type of speech could be read by its author to a select, private group. In the dialogue that bears his name, Phaedros has been at a private house, presumably not as the sole guest, where he has heard Lysias recite a speech persuading a good-looking boy to have sex with a man who openly admits that he does not love him. Socrates believes that Phaedros got Lysias to go over the speech more than once and turns out to be right in his guess that Phaedros has obtained the manuscript. Phaedros then reads this manuscript to Socrates in a cool shady spot to which their walk has taken them outside the city-walls, where Socrates and Phaedros can then fall to discussing and emulating this highly useful speech (*Phaedros* 227-30e).

Comparable with this is the situation at the opening of Plato's *Parmenides*. Antiphon is induced by his half-brothers, Adeimantos and Glaukon, to repeat for the benefit of Kephalos, a friend visiting Athens from Klazomenai, a celebrated conversation of some forty or fifty years ago. This conversation took place when Parmenides' younger associate Zeno had read a treatise to a small gathering at Pythodoros' house in the Kerameikos. Those present on that occasion, including the venerable aged Parmenides and the youthful

[4] G. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (London, 1963), 57, 128, 146. K.J. Dover, *Lysias and the Corpus Lysiacum* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968), 151-4 and 168-74 goes deeper, but on matters other than those addressed here, which Dover touches upon only once (p. 187).

Socrates, then began a discussion of this treatise's argument on the impossibility of plurality, a subject bearing heavily on the doctrine of the Forms (*Parmenides* 127d-35d). These recollections of the reading and subsequent discussion of a book make up what modern editors call the first part of the *Parmenides*. Another case is presented by the opening of the *Theaetetus*: Eukleides has come from Megara to hear from Terpsion his account, at which he has laboured over the years, of a conversation between Socrates, Theodoros the mathematician and the brilliant young Theaitetos some thirty years ago. Eukleides takes Terpsion home and has his slave read the book to the two of them there (*Theaetetus* 143b-c).

It would be idle to play with the notion that these introductory scenes of certain Platonic dialogues can claim historical authenticity. All that is being claimed for them is verisimilitude: Plato's audience would have had no difficulty with these scenes of philosophical and rhetorical works being read in small private gatherings of upper-class Athenians and would presumably have found nothing startling in the depiction of a work being read by an author, or being read by another, even by a slave-reader, in his presence, followed by a discussion of the work in which some if not all of the company take part. Out of this cultural setting, or rather perhaps from knowledge of it, come stories of readings of their works in private houses by Protagoras, Alkmeon, and Antisthenes (Diogenes Laertius 9. 54; 8. 5; 3. 35). These Platonic introductory scenes illustrate the private and personal world in which written works are read and talked about by small numbers of educated and leisured upper-class Athenians, who knew each other with the kind of close acquaintanceship natural in a small group and who almost appeared to value the social occasion, the company, and the delights of discussion as much as the work that is read at the gathering. This is the private world of literary audiences in Athens: a world that existed alongside, but was distinct from, the recitals of literary works in public space: such as those by (to think only of prose works) sophists and epideictic orators. This literature of public performance ranged from the funeral speeches delivered in the Kerameikos at Athens to works presented by orators and philosophers performing in competitions at Olympia or other *panegyreis*, such as the grandiose funeral celebrations staged for Evagoras of Salamis or Mausolos of Karia.[5] Prose

[5] Cf. Kennedy, *Art of Persuasion*, 152-67 and S. Hornblower, *Mausolus* (Oxford, 1982), 255-7, 332-7.

literature in late fifth- and fourth-century Athens could thus be divided into two broad classes: 'public' literature, including obviously forensic and deliberative oratory, written for performance to large communal audiences in public places, and 'private' literature, ideally for personal presentation to small, select groups in private homes, or else written as if it were such.

What happened on the literary scene in Athens will have been reproduced in other Greek cities with enough educated men of leisure to keep in touch with the cultural centre of the Greek world. These groups that gather in private to hear works read and to discuss them will be like the study-circles and other intellectual gatherings that Aristotle (*Politics* 6. 1313b) advises the tyrant to suppress, along with other types of upper-class social activities, because they can engender both cohesion amongst the participants and a lack of subservience to the *regime*. An early rhetorical handbook, the so-called *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* advises making one's style and personal deportment in delivering an artistic piece conform to the occasion, whether private or public competition or some other social occasion (38, 1445b; cf. 1421b, 1437a). Socrates too once in Plato defined rhetoric as 'a method of influencing men's minds in law-courts and other public gatherings as well as in private gatherings'. Phaedros does find the second part of the definition a novelty, but raises no difficulty when Socrates brings within the scope of rhetoric the work of 'Palamedes of Elea', that is the Eleatic Zeno, author of a philosophic treatise in the *Parmenides* mentioned above. In the *Republic* (6. 499a) Socrates also identifies the two areas of display for over-elaborate, Isocratean-style rhetoric as 'lawsuits and private social gatherings'. In *Letter* 2 (310e) Plato (or whoever) says that people like to hear the qualities of great men who combine wisdom with power praised in poetry and at private social gatherings (*idiai synousiai*, the same phrase as at *Republic* 6. 499a). Thus not only poetry but also speeches eulogising great men can be performed both in public and in private. So it emerges that, on the one hand, there were works which could be read either in public performance or private gatherings and, on the other, works which could be read only in private gatherings.

Rhetorical display at private gatherings could take the form of impromptu speeches in the intellectuals' party game familiar from Plato's *Symposium*. In the gathering presented by Plato, *Sophist* 217e-18a, the Eleatic stranger politely rules out a 'display of eloquence', that is a monologue by himself, in favour of dialectical discussion.

The impression is given here that such attention to the wishes of the company and the nature of the subject is a matter of courtesy. Reference has been made above to Phaedros busying himself with Lysias' *Erotic Address* (Plato, *Phaedrus* 227a-30c). A further example of friends meeting to read books together is provided by Xenophon's account (*Memorabilia* 1. 6. 14) of how Socrates with his friends extracted nuggets of wisdom from the books of the 'sages of old'. It was at a reading in company with others that Socrates is said to have first encountered Anaxagoras' book, when interestingly Socrates learned of its title only when the reader announced it (Plato, *Phaedo* 97b). With reading thus taking place, perhaps more often than not, as a shared activity, it was only natural for the conviction to be expressed (I avoid saying by whom) in Plato's *Seventh Letter* (341b-d) that philosophical enlightenment will not come from the written word alone but from the 'flame kindled from a leaping spark' only after prolonged intimacy between minds in the common pursuit.

To pass beyond the Platonic corpus, Isocrates, in his *Antidosis* of c.354-353, contrasts those orators who excel in public (*rhetores*) and those speakers who excel in private gatherings (*idioi syllogoi*, at 136) and shortly afterwards (147) contrasts two areas of sophistic display: festivals (*panegyreis*) and private gatherings (*idioi syllogoi*).

In a passage in this same work, *Antidosis* 253-57, that Isocrates liked so much that he repeated it from his earlier *To Nikokles* (5-9), Isocrates elaborated on the advantages of rhetoric to civilization, its techniques being useful in both the public sphere of lawsuits and in the private sphere of philosophical investigation (256): 'with rhetoric we engage in contests about disputes and in investigation of the unknown'.

Isocrates wished this work of his, the *Antidosis*, to be recited by persons who would lay aside their knowledge of his earlier works to concentrate on the *Antidosis* itself and who, instead of going through the whole work in one sitting, would recite it in sections, so as not to discomfort 'the company'. This last phase (*tous parontas*) and the phrasing of whole context (*Antidosis* 12) show that Isocrates had in mind readings of the work to audiences. That the grand master of oratory also expected reaction from the audience in the form of approbative comment and suggestions for refining the work's excellence is indicated by the opening of his *Philip* (4-14), where he recounts how the reactions of his audience led him to recast the work. In the same vein, at *Panathenaicus* 200-30, we learn that, while revising this work with three or four students, Isocrates accepted

their suggestion to try it out on a noted laconiser, whose objections to Isocrates' criticisms of Sparta were crushingly refuted. Further discussion (229-65) with students in residence at the time (233) assuaged Isocrates' doubts over whether he should publish the work. Discussion, in the pregnant sense of the word, is not to be expected in Isocrates' ambience, but these revelations say a good deal about the interaction between author and audience, even if the audience is in the special condition of being students.

To revert to Ryle, it is for study circles of old men meeting over a sequence of winter's nights that he believes Plato intended his 'mammoth' works, the *Republic* and *Laws*.[6] Whatever the status of that hypothesis, the contrast between the public sphere of rhetorical (and poetical) performance and the private sphere of readings of texts followed by conversation and discussion seems well-established. At the end of his discussion of this matter of the audience of Plato's dialogues, after noting that the existence of 'such sedulous intellectual symposia' is 'entirely inferential', but that there is 'small consolation that the tacitly-assumed counter theory, namely that Plato wrote these mammoth dialogues for individual readers of the written word, is just a speculative', Ryle alludes to Thucydides' *History* and suggests that, like the pamphlet known today as *The Old Oligarch*, it was suitable for reading in these private, anti-democratic clubs[7]. Some other works likely to have been enjoyed on such occasions are Andokides' lost *To his Hetairoi* (fr. II Dalmeyda, cited by Plutarch, *Themistocles* 32. 3) and, a work so odd that a real-life occasion for even its purported delivery is out of the question, Andokides 4, *Against Alkibiades*. Thucydides' pronouncement that his work was a 'possession for all time' (1. 22. 4) not a competition piece for the moment is asserting, amongst other things, that the work had no place in the arena of public performance. This raises the question of what kind of audience Thucydides had in mind for his *History* and how his expectations of that audience's responses might have helped shape his work.

I wish to build upon this hint that Ryle gave about Thucydides, especially as E.A. Havelock in his seminal work on orality and literacy made only slight reference to historical writing. He saw Thucydides as being placed well on in the transition from oral poetry to written prose as the dominant form of literary discourse and

[6] Ryle, *Plato's Progress*, 44-54.
[7] Ryle, *Plato's Progress*, 52-4.

regarded his *History* as 'a written volume which can become a piece of property on a shelf.'[8] Thucydides' *History*, with its density of detail, with the intricate, convoluted efforts of its author to explain and with its speeches packed with layer upon layer of meaning, is a work that apparently calls for careful reading in private rather than any kind of public performance. Whether Thucydides envisaged that his text would be read and discussed in small, select groups of the kind indicated above is a question that deserves to be revisited. Perhaps the type of person who might benefit in future from precise knowledge of Thucydides' subject-matter would naturally come from the upper-class few of intellectual tastes that make up those study circles, but I am very uncertain here. The sheer mass of detail in Thucydidean narrative and the austerely didactic tone do not, on the face of it, suggest a man who looked forward to and welcomed discussion of his *History*. We are left groping here for some picture of what historians expected would come of their works once they allowed what they had written to pass into the hands of others. Momigliano has surveyed the whole question of ancient historians' audiences and, while making fruitful suggestions for further enquiry, took up the matter of public performance of historical works but left untouched readings in private.[9] Any inferences about historians' audiences will need to be made largely from features of their works, although such inferences can be guided by what authors of other kinds of works at this time reveal about audience and performance. Thucydides' *History* has about it a certain obsessive tone, a preoccupation to record as much as is humanly possible, that might suggest that the writing of it was, as the reading of it was meant by its author to be, a solitary pursuit.[10] Contrast Herodotos, a prince of story-

[8] E.A. Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton, 1982), 10, 20-1, 147; the quotation is from p. 183. This conception of Thucydides' work as a written text has been taken up and elaborated by R. Weil, 'Lire dans Thucydide', *Le monde grec. Hommages à Claire Preaux*, edd. J. Binger *at al.* (Brussels, 1975), 162-8; cf. O. Longo, 'Scrivere in Tucidide: communicazione e ideologia', *Studi in Onore di Anthos Ardizonni*, edd. E. Livrea and G.A. Privitera, 1 (Rome, 1978), 519-54, and *Tecniche della communicazione nella Grecia antica* (Naples, 1981), 113-35.

[9] A. Momigliano, 'The Historians of the Classical World and their Audiences: Some Suggestions', *ASNP* ser. 111, 8.1 (1978), 59-75, reprinted in his *Sesto Contributo alla Storia degli Studi Classici e del Mondo Antico*, 2 (Rome, 1980), 361-76. On books and literacy in Athens c.400 see W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 80-92, and for what 'Theory' might have to offer: J. Svenbro, *Phrasikleia, An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, 1993), especially 187-216.

[10] Intensified interest in Thucydides' personality and beliefs, as pioneered, for example, by J.R. Grant, 'Towards Knowing Thucydides', *Phoenix* 28 (1974), 81-94,

tellers, skilfully varying his narrative flow with different kinds of material and effortlessly introducing and rounding off each episode, and each episode within another episode, with those signposts to audiences that in modern times have been brought under the heading of 'ring composition', amongst other features of oral discourse.[11] External evidence on Herodotos' career as a professional reciter of his works to audiences for pay or rewards first comes from the historian Diyllos (Jacoby, *FGrH* 73, F3) in the early third century: there is no obvious way of telling whether this belief is a creation of Hellenistic scholarship or a tradition with a kernel of hard fact. In any case, readings from Herodotos' *Histories* conceivably could have held the attention of large audiences.[12]

The contrast between Herodotos' entertaining style of narration and Xenophon's less spacious manner is his *Hellenica* might constitute a *prima facie* case against any kind of performance of Xenophon's historical work to a large audience, but in any case Xenophon the country-gentleman is on the other side of a social abyss from the professional performers, the sophists he looked down on so severely.[13] Public performance by Xenophon of any of his works is unthinkable. His Socratic writings and his own 'mammoth' *Cyro-*

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and W.R. Connor, 'A Post Modernist Thucydides', *CJ* 72 (1977), 289-98, has not led to comparable enquiry into the work's intended audience: W.R. Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton, 1984), 12-14, finds only limited possibilities here. Yet there are some interesting implications in A. Momigliano's remark that Thucydides 'was not born to love his fellow beings': *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990), 40.

[11] Cf. M. Lang, *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1984), 1-36. D. Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto, 1989), 236 n. 39, usefully points to the difference between the oral origins of some aspects of Herodotos' style and 'what he did with the earlier or final version of the huge written text that he left to posterity'. Revealing on Herodotos' narrative, Lateiner says little about the 'expectations' of a 'newly literate reading public' (pp. 6, 9, 24; cf. 26). Cf. S. Florey, 'Who Read Herodotus' *Histories*?', *AJPh* 101 (1980), 12-28, although his objections to Herodotos performing pieces from his own work are not persuasive.

[12] Diyllos' account of the Athenian state voting Herodotos ten talents surely implies performances by him. Compare Isocrates, *Antidosis* 166 (c.355), on the Athenians bestowing a proxeny and 10,000 drachmas (1 2/3 talents) on Pindar for a single phrase. This whole subject seems highly prone to exaggeration.

[13] This is not to deny or under-rate the interest and value of V. Gray's discussion of similarities between Herodotos and Xenophon in story-telling technique: *The Character of Xenophon's Hellenica* (Baltimore, 1989). For Xenophon's low opinion of sophists see especially *Cynegeticus* 13 (on this work see V.J. Gray, 'Xenophon's Cynegeticus', *Hermes* 113 [1985], 156-72), and, in general, see J. Luccioni, *Les Idées politiques et sociales de Xénophon* (Paris, 1954), 59-66.

paedia belong to the world of private readers, which means, in Xenophon's own day, those small circles that listened to readings and joined in discussions. There is no self-evident reason why Xenophon's effort at historical writing, his *Hellenica*, should not have been intended for such audiences. If it can be inferred that Xenophon wrote his *Hellenica* with such audiences in mind, a way can be provided of seeing why some features of the *Hellenica* that have been so severely condemned are there.

In itself Xenophon's *Hellenica* suffered in the nineteenth century one of the more catastrophic collapses of reputation amongst classical authors. Principally instigated by the influential B.G. Niebuhr,[14] criticism fastened upon grievous and related faults in this work of Xenophon that presumed to follow on from the ending of Thucydides' work with some account of Hellenic affairs from 411 to 362. The faults stigmatised in this work were omissions and bias and, even worse, the omissions were thought to be due to the bias. Historians weighed Xenophon's *Hellenica* in the balance and found it wanting for these very reasons.[15] Those prominent in the study of the *Hellenica* after Niebuhr deflected or muffled his over-hasty and sweeping pronouncements on Xenophon's laconism and the composition of the work, as well as doing a very great deal to clarify particulars of its character and content.[16] However, they were not able to rebut the fundamental criticisms of omission and bias, not even by appeal to the too convenient defence that the *Hellenica* lacked Xenophon's final hand.[17] Now the omissions or silences in Xenophon's *Hellenica* are numerous and, by any criterion of relevance, consequential.[18] Even a Thucydides might have found it a strain to

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[14] B.G. Niebuhr, 'Über Xenophons Hellenica', *RhM* 1 (1827), 194-8. Cf. C.J. Tuplin, *The Failings of Empire: A Reading of Xenophon, Hellenica 2.3.11-7.5.27* (Stuttgart, 1993), 13-14.

[15] For example, G.F. Hertzberg, *Leben des Königs Agesilaos 11 von Sparta* (Halle, 1856), 220-1; A. Schäfer, *Demosthenes und seine Zeit*, 2.2 (Leipzig, 1858), 3-9; G. Grote, *History of Greece* (1846-58, repr. Everyman's Library, London, 1906), 8. 102 n. 1; 10. 69-70.

[16] For example, G.R. Sievers, *Commentationes Philologicae de Xenophontis Hellenicis* (Berlin, 1833), 1-7; B. Büchsenschütz, 'Xenophons griechische Geschichte', *Philologus* 14 (1859), 508-49, at 508-10 and 522-4, and *Xenophons Griechische Geschichte*, 1 (Leipzig and Berlin, 1860), 3-8; and L. Breitenbach, 'Zur Kritik und Erklärung von Xenophons Hellenica', *Zeitschrift f.d. Gymnasialwesen* 15 (1861), 857-64.

[17] Büchsenschütz, *Xenophons Griechische Geschichte*, 1. 5-6; L. Breitenbach, *Xenophons Hellenica*, 1 (Berlin, 1884), 36, 50, 56 (with reference to Books 1 and 2).

[18] The surveys of the omissions by G.E. Underhill, *A Commentary on the Hellenica of Xenophon* (Oxford, 1900), xxi-xxiii; M. Sordi, 'I caratteri dell'opera storiographica

record the wars of the major Greek states from 411 to 362 with enough fullness to satisfy an age of positivism. In any case, Xenophon's *Hellenica* was, after Niebuhr, promptly and vigorously condemned for its yawning gaps and its bewildering reticence. Yet condemnation found no good reason to explain why Xenophon's historical narrative shifted back and forth between brief, barren outline and circumstantial fullness. That Xenophon did not include in his narrative such pivotal events as the so-called 'Second Athenian Confederacy', the liberation of the helots of Messenia in 370/69, or the founding of Megalopolis, seemed to reveal a historian who was wayward, incompetent and dishonest, especially as his work violated two of the cardinal virtues demanded by the increasingly professionalised historical writing of the nineteenth century, exhaustive detail and detachment. Lacking objectivity and diligence, Xenophon the historian was damned as partisan and incomplete.

The criticism of this century has not gone much further, except to invoke senility in Xenophon in order to explain this disjointed and spasmodic work, and even, in one instance, to resort to the desperate expedient of invoking irony as the leading principle of what Xenophon wrote.[19] Neither of such views explains much at all, though the latter at least raised the question of Xenophon's aims and usefully emphasised authorial intention, problematic as that notion has now become for those who wish to make it a problem. In his thoughtful Introduction to the Penguin translation of the *Hellenica*, George Cawkwell has emphasised Xenophon's allusiveness. Xenophon, he says, is to be read between the lines: 'The *Hellenica* is for connoisseurs'.[20] Yet how the connoisseurs are to judge it is left unstated. Cawkwell's magisterial expertise in the history of this period allows him to pursue the sequences of events that Xenophon omitted and distorted,[21] but why Xenophon wrote so patchily is not considered. Such a pronouncement as Cawkwell's on the *Hellenica*

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di Senofante nelle Elleniche', *Athenaeum* 28 (1950), 3-53, 29 (1951), 273-348, at 286-7; and H.R. Breitenbach, *Xenophon von Athen* (Stuttgart, 1966), 1671-98, indicate the great extent of these omissions.

[19] 'Senility' already in Niebuhr, 'Über Xenophons Hellenica', 198, and now revived by Cawkwell (see below, note 20), 21, 28. 'Irony': W.E. Higgins, *Xenophon the Athenian* (Albany, NY, 1977), 10-12, 81, 97-8, 102-5, etc.

[20] G. Cawkwell, 'Introduction', in *Xenophon: A History of My Times (Hellenica)*, trans. R. Warner (Harmondsworth, 1978), 35; cf. 43.

[21] As, for example, in G. Cawkwell, 'The King's Peace', *CQ*^{2} 31 (1981), 69-83, where he attempts to fill out the detailed provisions of the Peace of 387/6 upon which Xenophon was silent.

might deter further enquiry, yet two possibilities seem open for shedding some light on so peculiar a work as the *Hellenica*.

The first possibility begins with recognising that elsewhere Xenophon's writings both draw upon and emulate the work of others: in his Socratic writings Xenophon reacted to Plato and others, creating accounts of Socrates that were largely derivative and heavily fictionalised.[22] In his *Anabasis* Xenophon reveals at one point (1. 8. 26) his determination to correct the *Persian History* of Ktesias. His cryptic reference to the account of Kyros written by Themistogenes of Syracuse (*Hellenica* 3. 1. 1) and the divergent tradition from the *Anabasis* in Diodorus Siculus[23] are further traces of a wider complex of writing about these events, in which Xenophon's own version carried along the controversy. In a neglected passage of the *Hellenica* (7. 2. 1) Xenophon begins an enthusiastic encomium of the gallant gentry of Phleious, fighting on against all odds for the causes of oligarchy and Sparta, with the following words: 'All the historians record any heroic feat by the big cities. In my view, there is all the more reason to describe a prolonged series of heroic feats by a small city.'

Here and only here in the *Hellenica* does Xenophon make explicit that he is reacting at times with polemic and at times with alternative versions against other historians of the same time and the same affairs.[24] In dealing with the courage that these Phleiasians displayed in the last ditch Xenophon wanted to put on record matters which other historians ignored or downplayed but which Xenophon plainly thought were well worth earnest attention. A similar motive is to be inferred elsewhere in the work, especially in sections of the

[22] E. Gebhardt, *Polykrates' Anklage gegen Sokrates und Xenophons Erwiderung* (*Eine Quellenanalyse von Mem. I 2*) (Frankfurt/Main, 1957) and R. Nickel, *Xenophon* (Darmstadt, 1979), 92-108. Cf. O. Gigon, Kommentar zum ersten Buch von X (*Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenshaft*: 5) (Basel, 1953).

[23] 14. 19-31; cf. H.D. Westlake, 'Diodorus and the Expedition of Cyrus', *Phoenix* 41 (1987), 241-54.

[24] Studies of the *Hellenica* do not merely not draw this inference (for example, Gray, *Character of Xenophon's Hellenica*, 165-6; Tuplin, *Failings of Empire*, 36, 39) but some of them offer alternative explanations that exclude it: for example, E. Delebecque, *Essai sur la vie de Xénophon* (Paris, 1957): Xenophon wrote here to gratify his crony, Prokles of Phleious; H.R. Breitenbach, *Xenophon von Athen*, 1674-5, 1679-95: Xenophon used a source other than Thucydides in 1 and 2, but elsewhere used only oral information, including at 7. 2. 1 first-hand reports, possibly from Prokles; E. Soulis, *Xenophon and Thucydides* (Athens, 1972), 18-19: Xenophon was trying here to conceal his partiality (but not well enough to escape Soulis); Cawkwell, 'Introduction', 22, roundly denies any use of 'others' histories' in 3 to 7, referring *Hellenica* 7. 2. 1 to 'principally . . . historians of the Fifth Century'.

work where Xenophon moved from bare or highly selective narrative, or where he broke that silence of his that so exasperates his critics, and wrote at length, warming to a subject on which he had things that he particularly wanted to say to his audience. Examples of this expansive treatment to which Xenophon resorted when he saw fit include: Hermokrates' generalship (1. 1. 27-31); the Arginousai trial (1. 7); the trial and death of Theramenes (2. 3. 15-56); Kinadon's conspiracy (3. 3. 4-11); Agesilaos as matchmaker for Spithridates (4. 1. 1-15); Iphikrates' defeat of the Spartan *mora* (4. 5. 11-17–interesting as a kind of explanatory appendix); Teleutias' inspiring leadership (5. 1. 13-24); the siege of Phleious (5. 3. 10-17, 21-25); the acquittal of Sphodrias (5. 4. 24-33); the debate in the Athenian assembly over going to Sparta's rescue (6. 5. 33-49); and Euphron's tyranny in Sikyon (7. 3. 4-12). The outstanding example of polemical writing in the *Hellenica* must be Xenophon's account the battle of Leuktra (6. 4. 1-15), so selective as to be intelligible only as argument on what Xenophon saw as the real reasons for Sparta's failure. In each of these passages Xenophon had points that he wished to make and in doing so presumably wished to oppose opinions that were not only current amongst contemporaries but had found their way into historical works known to Xenophon but not to his liking. Only at 7. 2. 1 did Xenophon refer openly to the existence of other historians but it can hardly be assumed that he reacted against them only over Phleious in the 360s. Again, the patchiness and the omissions of the *Hellenica* as a whole must be borne in mind. The *Hellenica* is thus a work of pastiche and polemic.

However, the literary background, or the literary debts, or the intertextuality of the *Hellenica*, are another matter: so too are the thematic unity and, so to speak, the architecture of *Hellenica* 3-7, these being matters that condemnation of Xenophon's omissions and bias have somewhat obscured. Yet, briefly, if Xenophon's *Hellenica* is episodic, the work is not ramshackle but put together with care. *Hellenica* 1-2. 2, on the last part of the Peloponnesian war, has its own narrative thread and so too does the account of the 'Thirty' in 2. 3-4. It is in the rest of the *Hellenica*, where Xenophon dealt with far more than a single war, that his selective treatment of Greek history exposes him most to criticism. The omissions and concentrations in *Hellenica* 1-2 deserve a study of their own. What follows relates to some observable features of the rest of the work. Thus in Books 3-7, a subject singled out for expansive treatment early on has repercussions for the later narrative. For example, Sparta's war against Elis,

narrated with uncommon detail, at 3. 2. 21-31 leads to the irredentism of the Eleians at a crucial later stage of history (6. 5. 2), from which they go on to prosecute their own feud with the Arkadians (7. 1. 26, 38; 4. 12-32), making the turbulent affairs of the Peloponnese after Leuktra even worse. Boeotia, or 'Thebes' as Xenophon preferred to call it, makes an alliance with Athens in 395, purportedly to further Athens' own interest (3. 5. 3-16). At a later day a twist of events allowed Athenians of this frame of mind to revive this idea of the advantages of combining with Boeotia (5. 4. 34). After some time the Athenians were to realise that, as Boeotian power grew, they were left with the burdens and the costs of war against Sparta (6. 2. 1), so that they were even more aghast at the Thebans' indifference to Athenian interests and sensitivities (6. 3. 1) and were finally lead to look forward to the prospect of the Thebans getting their desserts (6. 3. 20; 5. 35). The structure of *Hellenica* 3-7 is not what the modern historical mind would regard as self-evidently right, but its emphases as much as omissions underscore what Xenophon thought important and what he expected to be of interest and concern to his audience in the 350s: primarily, why Sparta's hegemony of the Greek world had crumpled and why there had been so much 'instability and confusion' between the battles of Leuktra and of Mantineia, with even worse to follow (7. 5. 27).

The other possible line of enquiry that appears fruitful is to consider what Xenophon expected to happen to a copy of the *Hellenica* when he let it out of his hands. Modern criticism assumes, as in the case of Plato's dialogues, that the text went to individuals who read it, aloud of course, in private. So some may well have done, but the hypothesis being advanced here is that Xenophon expected his *Hellenica*, like the rest of his works, to go to those small groups of his peers: that educated and leisured audiences saw a book more as the occasion for a sociable gathering for discussion than something for solitary reading. This would apply to the Socratic writings, the *Hiero*; the *Agesilaus* (why not an encomium if Lysias' *Erotic Address* could figure at a house party?); the two handbooks the *Cavalry Commander* and *Art of Horsemanship* (the latter addressed, 1. 1, to the needs of 'my younger friends', and for such a work even the horsy set might make an appearance at a literary gathering); as well as the mammoth *Cyropaedia* (material for several sessions, obviously). The presence to Xenophon's mind of such select and congenial audiences helped him rapidly abandon his half-hearted efforts in *Hellenica* 1 and 2 at Thucydidean chronology and Thucydidean exhaustiveness. It was

more inviting to elaborate on such themes as this sympathetic audience would relish: to single out a couple, the moral dimension of leadership in both individuals and states and the galling disappointment that came when the realignment of Sparta and Athens in 370/69 failed to restore to the Greek world that kind of stability that commended itself to those who, in Xenophon's phrase, 'had the interests of the Peloponnese at heart (7. 5. 1; cf. 4. 35). The iniquity of democracies and demagogues and in particular the malice and villainy of Theban democrats, the satisfactions of 'chastising' aberrant Greeks and making war on and plundering barbarians would also have been familiar, reassuring and favourite subjects for such groups. More perceptive groups of listeners might have explored the work's melancholy reflections, more implicit than express, upon the struggle for power amongst states and upon the importance at times of individual human character, themes drawn out in C. Tuplin's study that raises the study of Xenophon to new heights.[25] Not only Athens had in its upper classes such sentimental conservatives who would be interested in hearing and discussing a work that dealt with suitable topics and, unlike Thucydides' *History*, did not tax the audience with as full an account as was humanly possible.

The assumption here (and it can only be an assumption but at least it is an explicit one that arises to explain things otherwise without cogent explanation) is that those small private reading circles could turn their attention to historical working as much as to philosophical writing. That Xenophon tried his hand at both might suggest that he expected much the same audience for either. Xenophon himself came from the small social class as that from which the little, club-like groups visible in some of Plato's dialogues were drawn. His Socratic writings were addressed to a similar audience as were Plato's, though in Xenophon's case the audience will have been less rigorous in its taste for philosophical argument and more interested in the practical lessons of conventional ethics. In Xenophon's hands the writing of history for such an audience was going to be gentlemanly and edifying. Xenophon paid careful attention to the art of military leadership, especially the ability to inspire trust and enthusiasm, at which Agesilaos could excel (3. 4. 16-19; 4. 2. 3-8; 3. 3-9, 13-14, etc.). That the same notable commander could at different times could excel or flop is noted by Xenophon (Teleutias: 5. 1. 3-4, 13-24; 2. 38-43; 3. 3-7; Iphikrates: 6. 2. 13-14, 27-32, 33-9; 5. 49-52),

[25] Tuplin, *Failings of Empire*, especially 117-21, 162-8.

and he added his own sage comments (5. 1. 4, 24; 6. 2. 32, 39; 5. 51-2), which may have been meant to invite responses from his audience. Above the level of such human affairs Xenophon drew the edifying lesson, with only so much direct comment as good taste required, that acts of impiety and bad faith do not go unnoticed by the gods, as the liberation of the Kadmeia showed in Sparta's case (5. 4. 1). The workings of divine power were visible in the Spartans' hasty decision to make war on Thebes in 371 (6. 4. 3), but such things needed only a word or two (cf. 7. 4. 32; 5. 13). If the argument presented here has any force, gentlemanly edification is to be seen as a useful concept in understanding Xenophon's *Hellenica*, a work of such remarkable idiosyncrasy. So repellent to the modern mind for its disingenuous looking silences and its open partisanship, the *Hellenica* is to be understood against the context of the kind of audience for which its author produced it. This work would have reassured Xenophon's peers about the fundamental and, to them, self-evident soundness of their convictions and, in the right kind of reading circle, it would have provided material for the exchange of platitudes on subjects and themes clear to the hearts of a right-thinking, sound-minded, upper-class audience.

CHAPTER TEN

GREEK ORATORY AND THE ORAL/LITERATE DIVISION

IAN WORTHINGTON

Greek orality and literacy have been studied from the viewpoint of a number of genres and sources, and arguments have been advanced for and against whether ancient Greek society was essentially an oral culture throughout the classical period, the extent of literacy, and also the impact which literacy had on oral society.[1] However, not much attention has focused on a genre that was both oral and written: oratory. An oration was originally orally delivered and then revised for posterity in a written form. In the revision process there was greater scope to add material to the earlier version since, *inter alia*, there were no restricting time limits, as was the case in a court of law and for an Assembly meeting (neither of which could last for longer than the number of daylight hours).[2] As well as the addition of material, there was scope to restyle the original speech, to make it more intricate and sophisticated in structure and composition, especially by the use of ring structuring. I have argued before for the presence of the stylistic device of ring composition in oratory, and that in the final version of a speech we should expect a more elaborate form of ring composition than the oral version which was more simple.[3]

One question which may be raised about the use of ring composition in oratory is: has the device any implications for the orality/literacy debate as it affects classical Athens? Until recently, my own work was concerned mostly with the implications of ring composition for the

[1] On orality and literacy in Greece see the two books by R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989) and *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992), and W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989).

[2] Trials: Ian Worthington, 'The Duration of an Athenian Political Trial', *JHS* 109 (1989), 204-7; Assemblies: M.H. Hansen, 'The Duration of a Meeting of the Athenian Ecclesia', *CPh* 74 (1979), 43-9.

[3] See Ian Worthington, 'Greek Oratory, Revision of Speeches and the Problem of Historical Reliability', *Class. et Med.* 42 (1991), 55-74, and 'History and Oratorical Exploitation', in *Persuasion*: *Greek Rhetoric In Action*, ed. Ian Worthington (London, 1994), 109-29. See further below.

orators' structural abilities, and especially for the revision of speeches. As a historian, the questions that interested me most were: (1) what effect did the change from oral speech to written speech have on the substance of speeches we have today, and (2) how does this change affect the veracity of speeches as historical source material. However, the device as it is used in oratory may also be brought into the literacy debate by considering what might be called an oral/literate division in oratory.

Given that a speech, practically speaking, has only a short life (after its oral delivery it can no longer win a case or sway the Athenians in Assembly to vote a certain way), it is possible that some of the complex levels of ring structuring we find in speeches, with their deliberate echoes of subject matter and theme uniting them, and thus the overall work, in a stylistic symmetry, would be lost on a listening audience, especially one hearing the work only the one time—in a law court, for example. If this were the case, that is, if it were thought that certain subtleties would be lost on the listening audience, then perhaps we might say that orations were revised after oral delivery with a different audience in mind, a non-listening one, or at least one not subject to distractions from noisy neighbours in a law court or with more time to listen and appreciate subtleties of style and composition.

Now, an argument against complex composition being lost on the listening audience is that Homer, for example, is very complex in his composition, and since his poems were meant to be recited, then complexity does not seem to be an issue to the listeners.[4] They appreciated the poetry as and when they heard it, which must have been a great many times. The same goes for tragedy. Aeschylus' Greek, for example, is more complex than that of Homer, but the denseness or opacity of Aeschylus' language, with its compound coinages, does not seem to be a bar to listening comprehension. Here, though, it may be said that hearers can follow and remember stories better than individual words and phrases.

The difference though between oratory and Homer and drama is that oratory has a short practical life: the average speech was delivered in either an Assembly or a court of law, and then at the end of the day, sometimes at the end of only a few hours, whether it had been successful or not, it was no longer of immediate or practical use. Not so with

[4] On complexity see especially K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer* (Princeton, 1993), W.M. Sale, 'The Trojans, Statistics, and Milman Parry', *GRBS* 30 (1989), 341-408, and chapter 2 above, and see also P.G. Toohey, 'Epic and Rhetoric', in *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric In Action*, ed. Ian Worthington (London, 1994), 153-75.

other literary forms such as poetry, which are meant to be recited/heard time and time again. Hence we should expect these works to be polished and swish, and that is what we get: Homer is consistently complex in his arrangement of material and structural sophistication. Accordingly we would expect our ephemeral speech to be nicely written and argued; after all, a well structured court speech presumably earned points from the judges, even when they might have thought the content was dubious—just as we might admire a politician who cleverly demolishes an opponent even when he or she might be pushing the truth and we know it. However, should we expect our ephemeral speech to exhibit the same compositional complexities as say Homer or Aeschylus or (another example) Pindar?

There is surely no question that ring composition shows that the speeches by the orators are complex in structure. Subject-matter, themes, narratives, and the like, have not been indiscriminately repeated time and time again merely for inattentive or slow-on-the-uptake jurors (we might expect less complex repetition in the oral version for precisely this reason). Everything has been fitted into a carefully planned and executed symmetrical pattern, which should cause us some wonderment when we remember such works would not be read or recited time and time again.

Let me now give some examples of structures from two forensic speeches, Dinarchus 1, *Against Demosthenes*, a speech delivered in 323, and Aeschines 3, *Against Ctesiphon*, delivered in 330. I have published these elsewhere,[5] and in repeating them here my intention is purely to demonstrate the above points. Those who wish to have a discussion of the historical contetxs of these speeches and the historicity of the material dealt with in the extracts from them are directed to the works cited in note 3 above. Note the echoes and linkages between the various elements, the marshalling of a vast array of subject-matter, and the resultant symmetry (the abbreviation D in all the following structures stands for Demosthenes, and A for Areopagus/Areopagites):

[5] The primary level of Dinarchus 1 is given in my *A Historical Commentary on Dinarchus* (Ann Arbor, 1992), 28; all post-primary levels of Dinarchus 1 are to be found at *Commentary on Dinarchus*, 339-55 (Appendix 2). Those given here and the structures of Aeschines 3 are taken from 'History and Oratorical Exploitation', 121-3. Further discussion of Dinarchus' style and use of ring composition: *Commentary on Dinarchus*, 27-37.

DINARCHUS 1
PRIMARY LEVEL

A (1-4) INTRODUCTION: The A was ordered by D to investigate the charges of bribery. He imposed his own death penalty if found guilty of taking a bribe and the A decided against him. Exhortation made to convict D and not endanger the rights and safety of the city and country.

B (5-11) JUSTIFICATION OF REPORT: The trustworthy reputation of the A is emphasized in order to counteract D's accusation that it lied when accusing him and Demades.

C (11-28) PAST HISTORY I: Reference made to D and selected past exploits to demonstrate that his changes of policy and acceptance of bribes were detrimental to Athens and its allies but beneficial to the city's enemies.

D (29-47) PAST HISTORY II: Citation of noble deeds of Athens' ancestors, allowing a contrast to be drawn between past and present leaders, and a call to curtail D's continued leadership because of his past.

E (48-53) JUDICIAL PROCESS OF A: D's proposal that the A should investigate the affair is highlighted, and the machinery of the A in beginning an investigation is related.

F (54-60) JUDICIAL POWER OF A: When publishing the results of its investigations the A need only issue a report against someone, which should be automatically accepted.

E^1 (61-63) JUDICIAL AUTHORITY OF A: The sovereign power of the A, previously supported by D, is set in a context of its condemnation of previous men, but D now challenges its report against him.

D^1 (64-85) PAST HISTORY II: Contrast drawn between leaders' responsibilities for both good and bad fortunes affecting a city, allowing appeal against the continued leadership of D in view of his past inaction and policies.

C^1 (86-103) PAST HISTORY I: Specific exploits of D and his venality in accepting a bribe are used in order to demonstrate that he has not worked for the good of Athens but for that of its foes.

B^1 (104) JUSTIFICATION OF REPORT: Further argument to discredit D's accusation that the A's report against him was false by the contrast with Demades.

A^1 (105-114) CONCLUSION: D, who proposed his own death sentence, must be condemned for the sake of the city and the country.

Each part of this primary level subdivides into a secondary level; I focus on the seconday level of Part C (11-28):

(11-13) Three of D's past actions are used to help illustrate his corruptibility.
(14) Timotheus' noble deeds, but nevertheless he was punished.
(15-16) D's actions ultimately led to the betrayal of his city.
(16-17) Timotheus did not argue the court's verdict and was prepared to die.
(18-21) Destruction of Thebes, attributed to D, is indicative of his ignoble past.
(22-23) Appeal is made to condemn D, as jury condemned others previously.
(24-26) D has betrayed Athens' allies despite his policies.
(26-27) Call made to punish men of note like D.
(28) Three of D's past exploits are used to help cast aspersions on his character.

The central element of this part (18-21), blaming Demosthenes for the destruction of Thebes in 335, subdivides into a tertiary level thus:

(18) D proved ineffective while Thebes was destroyed.
(18) D had 300 talents from Persia to use to help Thebes.
(18) The Arcadians welcomed the Theban embassy requesting help.
(19) The Thebans assured the Arcadians of their friendship.
(19) They could no longer endure Macedonian actions at home.
(20) The Arcadians were willing to help the Thebans.
(20) The Arcadian leader wanted 10 talents in order to help the Thebans.
(21) D did not want to spend 10 talents, despite the money from Persia.
(21) As a result the Arcadians did not help Thebes and the city was destroyed.

And some elements of this structure further sub-divide into a quaternary level:

(19) Not from a desire to end friendship with the Greeks . . .
(19) Led them [the Thebans] to revolt.
(19) They would not do anything against Greece.

(20) The Arcadians were willing to support the Thebans.
(20) They explained that they had to follow Alexander in body . . .
(20) But in spirit they were pro-Theban and for Greek freedom.

(20) Astylus wanted 10 talents to help Thebes.
(20) The Theban envoys asked D [who had the Persian gold].
(20) D was begged to save Thebes by providing the money.

(21) D envisaged the salvation of Thebes . . .
(21) But he allowed other cities to provide the money.
(21) The Arcadians were bought off and no help was given to Thebes.

Thus we have ring composition within ring composition, as we do with the structure of Aeschines 3.239-40 (part of a structure beginning at 238), which also blames Demosthenes for Thebes' destruction in 335.

I give only the post secondary-levels of these chapters:
Tertiary Level:

(238) I will show how great is D's imposture.
(238-239) Persian king, in danger and in need of allies, sent 300 talents of gold to Athens.
(239) This same thing brought about the alliance with Thebes.
(239-240) D betrayed the Theban allies when in danger and kept some Persian gold.
(240) In a nutshell, the Persian gold stays with D but the danger with the citizens.

Quaternary Level (elements two and four):

(238) Persian king, not long before Alexander crossed into Asia . . .
(238) Sent an insolent letter refusing gold to the Athenians.
(239) Persian king now overtaken by dangers upon him [Alexander's invasion] . . .
(239) Sent 300 talents to the Athenians.
(239) This was the owing to the crisis and need of allies [Alexander's invasion].

(239-240) D venally kept Persian gold though he had organised Theban alliance.
(240) The Arcadians, though mobilised, did not help for lack of money.
(240) D is a rich man but for his own gains serves as *choregos*.

Quinary Level (of 239-40):

(239) D talks of Thebes and of the ill-fated alliance all the time.
(239) D keeps quiet about the 70 talents of Persian gold he seized and kept.
(240) For lack of money the mercenaries did not hand-over the Theban citadel.

The echoes of subject-matter and themes as a result of ring structuring are evident. Now, irrespective of whether a person pleading a case 'read' a *logographos*' script or, more likely, performed it from memory (and therefore not word for word) in such a way as to make it look his own, it was designed necessarily for aural reception. Repetition of key points, then, by means of ring composition is in keeping with the short life of the speech at its practical level, allowing for inattention and so forth on the part of the listeners. In this oral version, the ring composition, I have argued,[6] would be more simple, perhaps encompassing only a 'primary

[6] See the works cited in note 3 above.

level' (and a shortened one at that, given time restraints), in order to hammer home the necessary points to listeners whose attention may be distracted by anything from their physical surroundings (a noisy or emotional Assembly or trial) to their attention spans. However, what is appropriate for the oral/aural process is not what we find in 'published' or circulated speeches which were built on—and consist of—far more complex ring composition. There is clearly a reader/writer process underlying their creation, and a different level of sophistication in the structuring and content is appropriate—one which, although heir to the oral tradition, has become modifed by a growing communication by means of writing. Thus we get an oral/literate division in oratory (cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3 and his spoken/written division).

In the case of the *Iliad*, Stanley argues that the complex ring composition in that poem is evidence of a literate poet at work. Merritt Sale questions the overall complexity of the scheme Stanley advances, and also criticises his conclusion.[7] Sale's points that in such structures 'the actual words in the text may echo each other very imprecisely', and therefore 'it is therefore hard to prove that a ring exists unless there is an exactly repeated string of signifiers' (p. 37) are valid, but are themselves imposing a requirement on a text that may be needless: the emphasis should be on recurrence of subject matter and/or theme as opposed to actual linguistic similiarity. Dinarchus shows this admirably, so does Aeschines, as do other orators.[8] And this is what we should expect in speeches: like Homer, from original oral beginnings or oral style a speech, containing a mass of differing items of information, each linked to each other and intimately related to the entire framework of the speech, has become shaped and changed in structure and format in its revision stage (by the impact of literacy). Thus, as Stanley argues (in the case of *Iliad*), complex ring structuring points to literacy.

Moreover, why would an orator go to all this trouble revising a work that had this one-day life-span, especially one that seemingly has no appeal to a wide audience (unlike tragedies or poems)? Of course, a particular speech deemed by many or all to be superb, such as Demosthenes' *Crown* oration, would have a wide appeal and would no doubt be recited again and again. However, I wonder whether people would flock eagerly to hear a private speech dealing with assault and battery

[7] See W. Merritt Sale, chapter 2, 37-40.

[8] Cf. the comments on Demosthenes' *Against Leptines*, *On The Symmories*, and *On The Crown* of G. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (London, 1963), 221-3 and 232-4.

(for example, Demosthenes 54, *Against Conon*), or Isaeus on inheritance rights?[9] Of course, size of audience is a determining factor here, and the latter examples, upon revision, may well have been intended for recitation and discussion at a private gathering, attended by fewer interested parties (cf. below).

Since after oral delivery the speech has no practical purpose, it must have had a different one. What though? Some speeches could have been circulated as political pamphlets (Lysias 12, *Eratosthenes*, is an obvious one here, especially as it was an unsuccessful speech), but more likely is that the revised speech allowed the orator to display—and have recognised—his compositional or literary skill. After all, at the basic level, this is a form of advertising, and speechwriting was how most, if not all, orators made their living. The implication of Cleon's comment at Aristophanes' *Knights* 347-50 that another orator had spent a whole night preparing a speech is that the extemporaneous, unprepared, speech would have been very different from the revised version. However, the former type would hardly have attracted clients wanting their 'own' speech to a *logographos*. Such self-advertisement as outlined above was even more important for those minor *logographoi*, about whom we know nothing but who *must* have existed, given the high degree of litigation in Athens from the middle of the fifth century onwards, who perhaps came from lower social origins and so did not have the 'right contacts' at first. After all, in an oral society like Athens word of mouth was all-ruling: the majority of people considering which orator to appoint or which *logographos* to approach for a particular case would no doubt conduct their investigation orally. Hence the need on the part of the *logographoi* to revise speeches and become 'known', even if only to a few who would, in turn, commend them (or not) to others.

A majority of speeches though, given their more limited audience, must have been used as models in the rhetorical schools for the teaching of rhetoric and logography. In school, they would have been studied and analysed as part of an orator's individual style and to help teach would-be orators. Thus, we have over fifty *exordia* of Demosthenes, some of which align with speeches we have today. Isocrates revised (and presumably used as a model) his *Panathenaicus* with a small number of

[9] This point was criticised by Ruth Scodel at the conference who remarked, quite rightly, that oratorical texts were meant to be recited and that by its very nature oratory would probably have a popular appeal. I agree as far as the more influential speeches go, but I still think some speeches would have been less popular than others by their sheer nature or the case which they addressed, and that this factor may also have influenced the orator when revising his speech for posterity.

students (200 ff.). And if the anecdote in Pseudo-Plutarch's *Lives of the Ten Attic Orators* (840e) is correct, Aeschines, while teaching rhetoric on Rhodes after he was exiled from Athens in 330, would quote from his speech *Against Ctesiphon* to his pupils, who were (surprise, surprise) unanimous in praise of it. The text-book factor, to call it that, would demand as perfect a piece of work as possible. Here, we are now dealing with an educated stratum of society, one which would necessarily be able to read and write, unlike the average audience at a tragedy or being stirred by the songs of Homer.

However, not every speech composed could be used in a school, and besides not every orator would have known that his works would be studied as part of a curriculum, especially after his death, hence the need to revise everything so carefully. Ruth Scodel asks the questions in her chapter (4) in this book: 'To what extent did poets anticipate the circulation of their works outside the original context of performance, and did they compose with a view to such distant audiences?' (p. 59). The same questions apply to the orators. No doubt the greater orators might have forecasted widespread interest in, or use of, their speeches, but even the greats might not have had all their speeches snapped up immediately as part of a curriculum. This takes us away from school and back to society at large. For if the speeches were deliberately revised, and some speeches did not have what I call wide appeal, why were they? Who would want to have them. Who would be able to read them? And, what happened to them after they left the hands of the orator and were sold to buyers?

It seems likely that the general level of literacy in classical Athens was not very high,[10] and that what we might call a high degree of functional illiteracy existed in Athens. Hence those able to recite speeches, let alone write them down, would be limited. The market for speeches amongst the general public, then, was narrow, and again the revised speech for the orator's own reputation and for the good of his business (self-advertising) comes to the fore.

However, is it possible to reconcile cleverly written sophisticated speeches with a *narrow* literate section of society? Surely if anything the reverse could or should apply: that because the orators were lavishing so much attention on their final versions, which were meant to be read a lot and available to all and sundry (we presume), that society as a whole must have been *more* literate? Not so: all it takes is a small but growing wave of literate communicators to be around to explain the degree of

[10] Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 43 ff.

subtlety and sophistication in the published literary creations—or rather, literary recreations.

And there was certainly this wave in classical Athens—one indication is the educated *symposia*, intended to bring people together and at which a work was read out, either by the author himself or, if the speech had been purchased and the author was no longer in need of any 'reaction' to it for further revision, by the purchaser, or even by his slave, and then it was discussed. That such private social gatherings met to discuss works and indeed had an influence on an author's final version is well argued by Douglas Kelly (see chapter 9). Another indication is the switch in the fourth century from oral to written testimony in court. Although the date of this change is controversial, it certainly took place in the period 390-378,[11] as a consequence of the new rule that private suits must go first to arbitrators. For, according to the author of the *Athenaion Politeia* (53.2-3), if the arbitrator could not reconcile the parties and so the case went to court, then the documents were put into vessels to be sealed. Then, at the trial, these documents were brought out, referred to, and read. What seems apparent here is that only a narrow group could handle the reading part of the operation.

Still in the forensic context, what about the client/*logographos* relationship? Presumably a goodly percentage of the people who needed a *logographos* to write a speech in the first place would not necessarily have been capable of reading or writing, let alone conversant with rhetorical techniques. Speeches seem to have been memorised and then spoken, but how did such people memorise them to speak them in court? Presumably, if a *synegoros* was not being used, someone read them out loud to the person, who then memorised them; the oral element yet again. However, the *logographos*/client relationship brings up an important point, in my opinion, involving ring composition and the level of literacy.

Given rhetorical training, the complexity of ring composition, and the general level of literacy, the ordinary client would not have been competent to undertake—or significantly help in—the task of producing the final revised speech.[12] For the more complex the ring composition, then plausibly the more sophisticated the writing style. If any collaboration

[11] G.M. Calhoun, 'Oral and Written Pleading in Athenian Courts', *TAPhA* 50 (1919), 177-93, dates it to 378 by means of legal phraseology, but E. Ruschenbush re-examined the introduction of written testimony and written pleadings (*Symposion* 1982, 34 ff.), and put the change in about 390.

[12] As I argued in 'Once More, The Client/*Logographos* Relationship', *CQ*^{2} 43 (1993), 67-72.

did take place, this might have amounted only to the inclusion of some extemporaneous comments in the speech—more likely is that the client merely recited (or had recited for him) a set speech, and the final product was the work of the orator. Thus, in the client/*logographos* relationship, we have further grounds for arguing that literacy was not widespread.

In my analysis of ring composition in certain orators, I have shown that parts of the structures of their works are not as sophisticated (complex) as other parts (which I shall call 'simple'), and in previous work I raised the question why revised speeches would have this two-tier form of construction.[13] By extension: is there a correlation between sophistication and arguments which by their nature were harder to establish? In the case of the orators, a correlation is evident, and so far I have argued that it is hard to reconcile the sophistication of complex ring structures in some parts of a speech with historical accuracy. A complex structure may well then flag fabrication of a storyline, and so have a bearing on the veracity of oratory as source material.

The information imparted on history and society is a major reason why historians at least use speeches today, but what about the post-oral use of speeches in classical Athens? What role did the revised speech play if it did not end up as part of rhetorical curricula, as many must not have done? The answer, as I mentioned above, is simple: the revised speech testified to the orator's own reputation, allowing him to show off his rhetorical skills to the growing wave of literate communicators, and along the way it was the perfect medium for promoting business. One cannot say that speeches were circulated as advertising junk mail for papyrus was not cheap and not everyone could afford it, but some obviously found themselves in the homes of the educated elite or *nouveaux riches*. That is why, in the case of logography, speeches were revised and circulated in the name of the *logographos* alone, and why, we may say, we would have few, if any, copies of speeches—it is not good for business if bad copies are mistaken for the real thing.

Writing has a major effect on the power of individuals in society. Niall Slater argues the importance of comic texts as evidence for Athenian literacy and that Aristophanes provides evidence that writing transformed certain kinds of activities and granted disturbing new powers to those who had not had them before (see chapter 6). He cites the decree-sellers and oracle-mongers of *The Birds* as examples of those who were empowered by, and attempted to profit from, the technology of literacy.

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[13] In particular 'History and Oratorical Exploitation', 109-29.

Old Comedy, then, satirically portrays some of the popular anxieties aroused by more widespread literacy.

Oratory may be added in support of this contention. Athenians wishing to have a say in state affairs had to sway an audience, and so speeches become a more important medium as literacy slowly increased. Correspondingly, the power of literate members of society grows, for it is these people who would attempt to persuade the *demos* and who wanted success and power in the state. That information is power, and thus literacy is power in the hands of a few, is seen in the great battle between Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller in Knights (997 ff.). *Demos* is eager to have the oracles carried by these characters read out to him, and eventually he is swayed by the Sausage-Seller: 'Be my guardian and guide. Re-educate me', he says.

And it would be these literate few who would attend the symposia, listen to speeches being recited, and discuss their content, especially political content. In some cases it is possible that certain speeches performed a didactic function, and were intended to affect listeners and/or readers to different opinions, perhaps owing to the machinations of groups which were influential in Athens, especially as the fourth century wore on.[14] It is these people who would sway the *demos* at an Assembly. Conversely, the reaction of those present at say a symposium may have caused the author, who could have taken his work there to be dscussed in his presence, to revise parts of his speech (as did happen: cf. Isocrates, *Philip* 4-14 ,on the reactions of his audience which influenced his work). This would thus have an effect on other listeners and/or readers when the speech was circulated in final form. Either way, the point is the effect of the written word on people, and thus the impact and exploitation of literacy.

Aristophanes was right to portray some of the popular anxieties aroused by an increase in literacy. The power or mercenary skill of the *rhetores* in the Assembly—and of the orators in the law courts—is another anxiety. As time continues it is the literate ones who are able to beguile the people and assure their political ascendancy by exploitation of rhetoric and law.

In conclusion, literacy generates the potential for a certain kind

[14] This may be evidenced, as I have said before (for example, 'Greek Oratory, Revision of Speeches and the Problem of Historical Reliability', 69 with n.40), in the different handling of Conon and Timotheus, who fitted into Iphicrates-Callistratus-Chabrias group, by a handful of orators over fifty years (Demosthenes 15. 9-10; [Demosthenes] 13. 22; Lysias 2. 54 ff.; Isocrates 7. 12, 15. 101 ff., 129-39; and Dinarchus 1. 14, 75, and 3. 17).

of compositional complexity, but in the case of public and private speeches we have to ask ourselves whether or not this complexity would be possible at the levels shown by ring structuring patterns in the orally delivered speeches. I suggest not. The majority of the sophisticated revised speeches, as revealed by ring composition, can surely only be aimed at a narrower section of society, be it in the rhetorical school, educated symposia, or not, since their content would generally not have the same widespread appeal as Homer or tragedy or comedy. Thus oratory can provide another argument for the restricted level of literacy in classical Athens. At the same time, enough people did appreciate the revised speeches so as to dictate that their prose composition be of the highest calibre. As a result, the oral/aural process gave way to a reader/writer process as society became more literate.[15]

[15] I would like to thank the referee for the constructive comments on this chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WINGY MYSTERIES IN DIVINITY

CAROL G. THOMAS

As early as the sixth century, Xenophanes of Colophon ridiculed his fellow Hellenes who thought of deity in human form. 'If oxen or horses or lions had hands to draw with and to make works of art as men do,' he reasoned, 'then horses would draw the forms of gods like horses, oxen like oxen, and they would make their gods' bodies similar to the bodily shape that they themselves each have' (fr. 15, trans. Hussey). He was equally scornful of the conception of deity that led poets like Homer and Hesiod to attribute 'to the gods everything which brings shame and reproach among men: theft, adultery and fraud' (fr. 11, trans. Hussey). In place of such deities, Xenophanes maintained, 'one god there is . . . in no way like mortal creatures either in bodily form or in the thought of his mind' (fr. 23, trans. Hussey).

Not unique, still Xenophanes' view was not representative of the usual Hellenic conception of deity. Most Greeks thought of divinity in the way he scorned: human in form and character, the gods superintended the human sphere while participating in it. Though this view bothered only a few ancients, it has puzzled many in more recent times. With their sophistication in such diverse areas, could the Greeks truly have believed in deities such as these? Perhaps, these sceptics conclude, the anthropomorphic figures are merely symbols for deeper, more complex views of divinity. John Gould says plainly: 'a god wholly within the compass of man's image of himself explains nothing, offers no reassurance against the fear of chaos, and any religion must extend the range of the explicability of things beyond what men can derive from projection of their own self-awareness on to the external world.'[1] Yet the correctness of this observation need not lead to the conclusion that the Greeks did not

[1] J. Gould, 'On Making Sense of Greek Religion', in *Greek Religion and Society*, edd. P.E. Easterling and J. Muir (Cambridge, 1985), 1-33 at 33–hereafter cited as *Greek Religion*.

believe in their gods. It did not lead even Gould to this position. We will find a better answer by examining the conditions in which Greek religion developed and flourished.

Half a century ago, M.P. Nilsson looked to other 'simple' cultures of primitive people for analogies in describing the nature of ancient Greek folk religion and, as in so many areas of his investigation, he defined a crucial factor in early Greek culture. The religion was that 'of simple and unlettered peasants'.[2] More recently, in his introduction to a collection of essays on Greek religion, Moses Finley suggested that the Dinka or Azande of Africa provided useful parallels and comparative insights for the Hellenic view of divinity.[3]

These suggestions are valuable in part since the Greek conception originated in the impoverished–thus simple–period of the dark age. Equally important is the analogy to other 'unlettered' peoples: the classical Greek conception of deity grew from non-literate roots akin to those producing the Dinka and Azande conceptions of deity and, in all three cases, continuing orality nurtured those beliefs and practices.[4] I will argue that the force of orality can be felt in three of the most incomprehensible features of Greek religion: the definition of deity, the sorts of accounts in which the gods are remembered, and the 'carnival'-like characteristics of Greek religious practice.

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[2] M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (New York, 1940), 21. While Nilsson is likely to have used the adjectives for their basic senses, their larger nuances convey several levels of meaning. The adjective 'simple' has fallen into disfavour as we have learned more about this period, and other similar cultures.

[3] M.I. Finley in the introduction to *Greek Religion*, xiv. Finley went on to assert that there are differences between the Greeks and Dinka who 'are not even literate'. Literacy is the very point at issue since the religion of both cultures grew from similar non-literate roots. The Greeks preserved their religious conceptions as their culture became increasingly literate; the Dinka culture remained oral.

[4] I am persuaded that orality remained the prevailing mode of communication in Greece well into the second half of the fifth century if not into the fourth century: see the work of E. Havelock beginning with *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963); W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989); and R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989) and *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992).

The force of orality on conception of deity was felt in a great many cultures; it is certainly not unique to Hellenic religion. The present discussion is limited not by the applicability of the analytical tool but by the scope of the conference at which the original paper was presented.

DEFINITION OF DEITY

On the fairly common assumption that the Homeric epics had assumed their essential form before the end of the eighth century, we can conclude that Greek deities were regularly thought of anthropomorphically from the last decades of the dark age, if not much earlier.[5] It would be untrue to argue an uniform conception of deity in any single period of antiquity since even during the classical age the twelve Olympians assumed different guises in various parts of Greece. Moreover, the great pantheon of gods represents but a single level of a many-levelled faith. Despite these differences, however, a common conception of deity emerged throughout the Greek world, binding Greeks together and distinguished them from non-Hellenic peoples. Herodotus, speaking through the Athenians, described a common view of the gods as one of the strongest bonds ensuring Athenian allegiance to the Greek cause against Persia (8. 144). And in this common view, the members of the Homeric pantheon stride forcefully from the verses of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Of course, they were not mere humans: the divine (*to theion*) had greater than human powers and was undying. Gods were unlike humans, too, in their ability to change form instantly. Even the hubristic suitors of Penelope were wary of this trait:

> A poor show, that–hitting this famished tramp–
> bad business, if he happened to be a god.
> You know they go in foreign guise, the gods do,
> looking like strangers, turning up
> in towns and settlements to keep an eye
> on manners, good or bad.
> (*Odyssey* 17. 483-7, trans. Fitzgerald)

Deities can exchange human guise for an animal form, as Athena, abandoning the form of Mentes for that of a bird (*Odyssey* 1. 319-20); deity resides in natural objects (the herms are Hermes, as well as rocks); and divine power appears in non-material forms or qualities (Zeus was recognised equally in the form of a human male *and* a bull *and* thunder).[6]

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[5] R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns* (Cambridge, 1982), suggests dates of 750-725 for a final form of the *Iliad*, and 743-713 for the *Odyssey* on the basis of language.

[6] Gould, *Greek Religion*, 29: 'The imagery of animal forms, in particular, is pervasive and lies always just behind the visible foreground of Olympian humanity.'

How can we understand such confusion of form? Or better, how can we come to terms with the Hellenic confusion of form? Does it spring from an innate love of wondrous tales, a fondness for allegory? It cannot be denied that the Greeks were inordinately fond of colourful tales, but I suggest, too, that the conception is little different than the respected Aristotelian conception, though couched in quite different terms. Aristotle explained:

> Nature passes from lifeless things up to animal life by such gradual degrees that the continuity obscures boundaries and puzzles us how to classify intermediate forms.
> (*Zoology* 8. 1, trans. Wheelwright)

Being is not separated into distinct categories in the Hellenic view; rather it is regarded as a continuum with various capabilities found along a band of being that extends from plant to animal to human to deity.

The points at which forms overlap are distinguished by forms that partake of characteristics of the higher and the lower orders of being, Aristotle's intermediate forms. Animal-humans–centaurs, minotaurs, seilenoi, Pans, Scyllas, harpies, gorgons, and sphinxes–stand at one juncture; at another are creatures possessed of greater-than-human capabilities, the heroes who are more than human but less than deity. Even at the node connecting inanimate with animate forms, the characteristics of both join. Syrinx, a maiden in flight from Pan, transformed herself into a reed, whose 'voice' remains almost human. Aristotle defined the condition analytically; traditional stories used narrative to show Proteus, for example, as 'he successively assumed the forms of lion, serpent, leopard, boar, water, tree and old man' (Homer, *Odyssey* 4. 456-8).

The sense of closeness between all spheres of being, and espe-

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Zoomorphic depiction of deity seems to agree with the evidence from the Bronze Age: see, for example, C.G. Thomas, 'More of Bull Leaping/Tossing', *LCM* 9 (1984), 136-7 and J. Muir, 'Religion and the New Education: The Challenge of the Sophists', in *Greek Religion*, 191-218: there was 'an easy association between the deity and the feeling, quality or substance associated with him or her' (204), and in Greek religion 'God and what god represented have become interchangeable' (204). B. Dietrich, 'Views of Homeric Gods and Religion', *Numen* 26 (1979), 129-51: 'The gods not only governed elemental powers of nature but became identified with them' (146-7). The descriptions often occur in similes but even in this context, the terms must be appropriate to the deities described.

cially between human and divine, is at the heart of Hellenic culture.[7] We might wonder if anyone truly believed that the Greeks were spurred against the Persians at Salamis by a phantom shape of a woman whose voice contemptuously called 'Fools, how much further do you propose to go astern?' Herodotus, however, recounts that the voice could be heard by every man in the fleet (8. 83). Mortals and immortals could touch–even join in love–without losing their separate identities.

A notion of the kinship between gods and men is not surprising when we dig to the roots of Greek religion which extend into the deep preclassical past.[8] That past, even the high Mycenaean Age, was fundamentally an oral society.[9] A point stressed by Walter Ong is that oral cultures view all forms of life as closely related: knower and known, subject and object are not distanced from one another. The reference point for all knowledge, however, is animate, articulate being and the unknown sphere is described in the only possible way, that is, in terms intelligible to animate, articulate beings. Knowledge is, in other words, anthropocentric. Divinity, like everything else, is defined in these terms.

The means of preserving this knowledge helps define the nature of the divine for when communication is based on sound impressions, space itself is viewed as inhabited, as it is with winged words.[10]

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[7] Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion*, 40: 'The sacred and secular were intermingled in a manner which is sometimes astonishing to us.' For a clear statement of the relationship see B. Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953) and *Poetry and Society* (Bloomington, 1961)–for example, 'this higher life which the gods live on their exalted plane endows the existence of men with its meaning' (*Discovery*, 30).

[8] On continuity of religion see, for example, B. Dietrich, 'The Dorian Hyacinthia: A Survival from the Bronze Age', *Kadmos* 14 (1975), 133-42. Evidence of cult continuity is one of the major results of the present generation of Bronze Age investigations. A recent survey of the evidence is given by B. Rutkowski, *The Cult Places of the Aegean* (New Haven and London, 1986), chap. 9, 'The Mycenaean Temples'.

[9] Some wish to make it a literate culture but the evidence we possess simply does not support that position. As J. Chadwick concludes, *Linear B and Related Scripts* (London and Berkeley, 1987), 11: 'The finds show that writing was not in widespread use in Mycenaean Greece . . . Writing seems to have been exclusively a bureaucratic tool, a necessary method of keeping administrative accounts and documents, but never used for historical or even frivolous purposes.'

[10] W. Ong, *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven and London, 1967), 164. A. Luria gives a fascinating description of a more recent illustration of the vivid presence of word in *The Mind of a Mnemonist, A Little Book About A Vast Memory* (New York, 1968). The subject of the study had a mind that operated through vision, never abstractions. He was 'an individual whose conscious awareness is such that a sound

Because it is the normal means of communication, it is not strange; however, sound carries an aura of mystery that contributes to the sense of the sacred. The sacred, like sound, is all around, neither remote nor separate from the human lifeworld. Nor is sound a single force: it is multiple, coming simultaneously from many directions. One of sound's most important characteristics is that it is active, alive. Issuing from an external source, it buffets the hearer. Nor can the hearer control the nature of sound, harsh or strident though it may be, except by distancing himself from its source.

Greek deities have many of these same features: they are numerous and act simultaneously, often unpredictably. And Hellenic deity is extraordinarily active: not unmoving, ineffable beings, the Greek gods are actors, fully participating in affairs of life and death, often aggressively so. They quarrel with one another, or contend with humans, or rage against elemental forces more often than they enjoy peace and harmony. This tendency may simply reveal the Greeks as a quarrelsome people, picturing their gods of like temperament. Or we can remember the impact of sound.

Accounts of Deity

Apparent contradictions are a regular feature of the Greek religious traditions. Accounts of even a major deity such as Zeus differ enough to have given rise to the speculation that two male deities have been merged into one figure. A Cretan deity born on Mt. Ida or Mt. Dikte, hidden in a cave at Lyktos where he was tended by bees, the goat Amaltheia and the Kuretes, was once, some maintain, quite independent from the son of Rhea, deposer of his father as lord of heaven and earth. Contradiction carries into religious practice as Walter Burkert has clearly demonstrated.[11] Why should wine destined for the Olympians be poured on the ground?

The accumulation of traditions, accounts and practices over centuries is surely at least a partial answer to this situation. Recent

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becomes fused with a sense of color and taste; for whom each fleeting impression engenders a vivid, inextinguishable image; for whom words have quite different meanings than they do for us–such a person cannot mature in the same way others do, nor will his inner world, his life history tend to be like others. He tended to lose sight of the distinction between what formed part of reality and what he himself could "see"" (151-2).

[11] W. Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', *GRBS* 7 (1966), 87-121.

archaeological investigation supports the view of continuity of cult practice at certain locations for centuries longer than first postulated, from the early Iron Age or even the full Bronze Age.[12] Though the nature of the practices may have altered from one generation to another, the physical evidence of continuity suggests that layers of earlier belief may well have been retained by successive generations and incorporated into current religious belief and practice.

Another means of accounting for the variation in accounts of deity is the localism of Greek culture, a characteristic that appears to mark the whole of ancient Greek history even the Late Bronze Age.[13] In the classical period, the boundaries of the city-states enhanced cultural differences between the states; thus cult practices differed by design as well as through the persistence of local beliefs.

Reliance on oral tradition also played a major role in configuring Greek accounts of deity. According to one of its singers, the content of the oral tradition was 'the custom-laws of all, and folkways of the immortals' (Hesiod, *Theogony* 66). It is mythic in that it is rooted in the timeless past, but has the serious function of validating present-day beliefs and institutions or exploring fundamental problems.[14] Certainly, classical Greek religion was more than its myths yet the myths and legends need not be explained away as 'unbelievable, although picturesque' even to those who told and listened to them, as H. Rose declared on the opening page of his *Handbook of Greek Mythology*. They are, rather, the natural product of an oral tradition.

Narrative form emphasising heroic beings and events is the glue conferring memorability on oral tradition,[15] that can be seen as 'a great web of vernacular, orally-transmitted mythology which penetrated every part of the Greek world, which was known to everyone of whatever level of education, and which did not need to depend at

[12] See above, note 7 and C. Morgan, 'The Origins of Pan-Hellenism', in *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches*, edd. N. Marinatos and R. Hägg (London, 1993), 18-44.

[13] Regionalism was a *leit motif* of the fifth international Aegean Conference on *Politeia* held in Heidelberg, 10-13 April 1994.

[14] 'In an orally preserved tradition, it is difficult for a split to develop between these two [nomos and ethos]. They remain separable aspects of a single custom-law-and-ethic': E. Havelock, *Prologue to Greek Literacy* (Cincinnati, 1971), 41. In its own time, the tradition was simply *mythos*, word or speech. Its definition as myth came only late in the classical age. M. Detienne argues persuasively that myth is separated from 'logos' only when writing fosters critical analysis during the time of Plato and particularly in Plato's own analysis: *The Creation of Mythology* (Chicago, 1986).

[15] Ong, *Presence of the Word*, 204-5: 'The epic hero . . . appears as an answer to the problem of knowledge and communication in oral-aural cultures.'

all on epic poetry.'[16] To be remembered, however, the web had to be constantly structured: new information is constantly added to the stock of communal knowledge as significant, recent items are incorporated into the older established tradition. Individual pieces that are not fitted into the larger corpus of information known to the whole community are likely to be distorted or even completely lost. Many believe that structuring of tradition occurs within the first and second generations of transmission.[17]

The process of fitting new material to the old conserves, yet it also produces, constant change, as Milman Parry demonstrated for the Greek oral tradition. The language of oral poetry is a product of long years of creative shaping by many narrators. Although the inheritance sets certain bounds of subject and of style, an oral poet is not fettered by the inherited elements of his community's tradition; he has the freedom to link as he wishes the common themes and the fixed units of expression, that is the formulas, of that tradition.[18] Consequently, each time an account is sung or recited in an oral culture it is altered by the singer. Unconscious change comes from the very nature of orality since precise and total recall is simply not possible. Conscious alteration of inherited accounts arises from the creativity of the singer.

The selection of what to preserve, change or omit occurs on the basis of what is important in the *present* social and cultural environment (that is, the time when selection occurs), and the very criteria for importance can change–and should be expected to be trans-

[16] A. Snodgrass, 'Poet and Painter in 8th century Greece', *PCPhS* 205 (1979), 118-30, at 119. Detienne, *Creation of Mythology*, 102, is persuasive of the same conclusion: Greek myth 'belongs to the silent tradition which is whispered in proverbs and anonymous sayings outside the realm of the written word'. As later written accounts and scenes painted on pottery reveal, the tradition was far from standardised: A. Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece: the Age of Experiment* (London, 1980), especially 65-84.

[17] J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (London and Nairobi, 1985), 161: 'Memory changes over time, even when dormant, because of the constant input of new items in memory which must coexist with older material and force its reappraisal, its reorganisation, and, in the case of repetitive events, it disappearance.' Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 124, argues that 'in many cases family history seems to extend for only three generations to the speaker's grandfather'.

[18] A notable theme in recent Homeric scholarship is appreciation of the talent of a particular bard working within an oral tradition. M. Edwards, *Homer: Poet of the Iliad* (Baltimore and London, 1987), demonstrates Homer's extraordinary skill in this regard. Quoting Nietzsche's description of Homer 'dancing in chains', Edwards concludes 'so to some extent does any artist, but few have exploited, or ignored, a rigid convention with such individual artistry as Homer' (53).

formed–forcing further rearrangements. In fact, an account is likely to vary from one telling to the next even when it is given by the same narrator.[19] Consequently, an oral culture possesses a range of information remembered in relatively short accounts from which individual narrators create longer, often very different narratives.

The structuring of the orally preserved material is associated with certain recurrent characteristics, particularly measures employed to make it memorable: M. Lang singles out oral narrative that draws on poetic forms, heightened suspense, description of larger-than-life events and people, and regular repetition of words and situations.[20] It strives to link present to the past, that is, to the single deep past. In the joining of the seams, it is not unusual to find that traditions from various periods overlap so that, from a literate perspective, there seems to be little chronological precision in most oral traditions. As a Hopi man from a more recent oral culture reflected: 'a long time ago, maybe a hundred years, who knows? It is not well to count the years, it makes us old.'[21] When epochs become too numerous for easy memory, they are bundled together in fewer sequences, producing apparent anachronisms, where past is incorporated into present and present conditions are projected into the past.[22]

Effects of patterning are plain in descriptions of Greek divinity. The theogonies created by poet-philosophers from the time of Hesiod produced ordered schemes of divinity, the end product of an oral tradition stretching far into the past but rendered more durable through the newly-discovered alphabet.[23] They show the sequential ordering of data that is usual for oral cultures: first there was Chaos and next came Earth; next came . . . and then . . . after this. At the

[19] 'On the lips of the same singer a poem may enjoy great, even verbal, stability. But the stability is spurious, the product of one singer's habitual recitation, and it is shattered when the poem passes to another singer. Back we go to the basic string of themes, and the new poet ornaments these according to his own training and predilection. Nor is the string of themes itself stable. Addition, omission, change of order may all be expected . . . occasioned by accident, incompetence, artistic pretension, or the wish to curry favour': J.B. Hainsworth, 'The Fallibility of an Oral Heroic Tradition', in *The Trojan War. Its Historicity and Context*, edd. L. Foxhall and J. Davies (Bristol, 1984), 111-35, at 116.

[20] M. Lang, *Herodotean Narrative and Discourse* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1984). The features are widely applicable to oral method.

[21] Recounted by Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 178.

[22] Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, on the example of the Philaid family in chapter 3.

[23] The persistence of oral technique in the poetry of Hesiod and in the Homeric Hymns cannot be denied even though the poets had become literate. See, for example, J. de Romilly, *A Short History of Greek Literature* (Chicago, 1985), 22-3.

same time, the accounts reveal seams that show a patchwork nature, so that 'older' deities continue to play a role not only in myth but also in ritual while 'younger' deities have traditions that smack of the remote past. Both forms of memory–oral patterning and written lists–ensured, albeit in different ways, the preservation of essential beliefs and practices. In turn, the continuance of such beliefs and practices, often at odds with one another, attests the strength of an oral mentality well beyond the dark age and the archaic period.[24]

Religious Practice

Vigorous themselves, Hellenic gods required action, not contemplation, on the part of their worshippers. Greek religion has been summarised as a 'matter of rituals, festivals, processions, games, oracles, sacrifices–actions, in sum–and of stories, myths, about concrete instances in the working of the deities, not of abstract dogmas.'[25] The importance of dance in religious activity ranging from local festivals to the grand dramatic performances has recently been treated by S. Lonsdale.[26] In a word, picnics, parades and colourful tales define Greek religion.

If we consider the fundamental techniques of an oral culture, however, another explanation emerges since memory itself is associated with action.[27] Gestures, movements, and vocal intonations help to fix words and ideas into a pattern. Physical participation accompanies the recitation of oral tradition and is expected by the auditors who are not merely watching and listening but are themselves active. Audience, in the words of Vansina, 'interacts with the teller, and the teller provokes this interaction by asking questions, welcoming exclamations . . . The teller and public are creating the tale together.'[28]

Such interactions are frequent events. During the fifth and fourth

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[24] B. Gentili, *Poesia e Pubblico nella Grecia Antica da Omero al V Secolo* (Bari, 1984), on the oral features of the archaic literary tradition.

[25] M.I. Finley, *The Legacy of Greece* (Oxford, 1981), 4. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion*, 76: 'It consisted in acts more than in words.'

[26] *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion* (Baltimore and London, 1993).

[27] A. Luria, *Language and Cognition*, ed. J.V. Wertsch (New York, 1981), 164 and J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition, A Study in Historical Methodology* (first published as *De la Tradition Orale*, 1961; English translation H.M. Wright, Chicago and London, 1965), especially 31 ff.

[28] Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 34.

centuries, one-third of an Athenian year was given over to festivals. Athens was not unusual: more than 300 public festivals from over 250 places are known to have been celebrated throughout the Greek world.[29] Similar, though less grand, celebrations took place daily at home. Sacred flowed into secular constantly just as the spheres of mortal and immortal joined easily.

The spheres intersected in yet another way: humans 'selfishly' concerned themselves with those deities who were most active in the moral sphere–'man needs gods who are near to him.'[30] Cults, ceremonies, even private prayers and questions to the gods, were directed to those who were likely to intercede or act on behalf of humans in ordinary affairs. Leaden tablets from Dodona, for example, ask whether a wife will bear a child, if it will be profitable to buy a house and land, and if it will be wise to breed sheep.[31] The healing god Asklepios was recipient of the largest number of attested sacrifices.[32] The prayers of the gold lamella are cries of the souls of the dead for assistance, information, and salvation.

A notable feature of Greek religious practice is its setting: cult activities much more frequently occurred out of doors than within a building. Climate and environment made this possible, certainly, but a sacral quality of space enhanced the practice.[33] As mentioned earlier, in a society conditioned by oral communication, space itself is mysteriously inhabited; obviously the unimpeded open air is closest to the inhabited space. Even the structures serving religious purposes are outward-looking and open. Describing the Parthenon, for example, Wheeler claimed that 'neither the building nor its decoration had any inner life; it was a perfect exterior.'[34] This description is appropriate for all classical Greek temples that look outward; there are no counterparts to the stained-glass windows or mosaics of later religious structures to rouse a contemplative attitude in worshippers seated within. There were no worshippers within since respect to divinities demanded participation in an event not private contemplation. Thus, while the temple may embody our perception

29 P. Cartledge, 'The Greek Religious Festivals', in *Greek Religion*, 98-127, at 98.

30 Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion*, 90.

31 C. Carapanos, *Dodone et ses ruines* (Paris, 1878), 68-70.

32 M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Piety* (Oxford, 1948), 13.

33 R. Schumacher's discussion of three related sanctuaries of Poseidon in *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches*, edd. N. Marinatos and R. Hägg (London, 1993), 62-87, is a good illustration of the link between location and cult.

34 M. Wheeler, *Roman Art and Architecture* (New York, 1964), 12.

of Hellenic religion, a simple, outdoor altar may be closer to the Greeks' own symbol of their cult practice.

Temples, and for that matter most major buildings, accommodated themselves to space in another important way: a place was judged appropriate for a building because of its natural features; it was not altered in order to become appropriate.[35] Certain natural features possess surprising attributes of beauty or calm or strength that imbue them with a sense of *to theion*. The difficulty of reshaping the land of Greece needs little comment but beyond conservation of labour, Greeks felt that the land was endowed with being like all living things and could no more be redesigned than other beings. As a resting place for the dead and as memorial to divine or nearly-divine (heroic) activity in the human sphere, the land assumed another kind of sanctity (Pausanias 3. 13. 8, 16. 1; 20. 5, 24. 3). It was at such places–'the leftover bit of the reality of a long past event'[36]-that regular festivals and ceremonies drew groups of celebrants together for the purpose of honouring gods, heroes, and ancestors. In the process, the land was a participant in the gatherings, one of the spheres of an interactive lifeworld.

In their activities, the celebrants were members of a group, acting primarily as social beings, part of an *oikos* or *polis*. Expanding upon Gilbert Murray's description of Hellenic religion as the 'inherited conglomerate', Muir writes of it as 'a way of life interpenetrated by an enormous variety of religious ritual, practice and belief.'[37] It was a way of life for individuals in their community, intertwined with the rest of life, practised and believed almost unconsciously.

The sense of community was constantly reinforced by oral tradition, itself a communal product, 'formed in the process of actual social interaction and swallowing the individual act, response, achievement.'[38] Although individual narrators are important to the tradition both in its formation and continuance, they are controlled by the interests of their community so that the needs of the collec-

[35] 'We make a spot holy by putting a sanctuary there; but in antiquity, the holiness belonged to the place itself, and a sanctuary was erected there because the spot was holy': Nilsson, *Greek Piety*, 9.

[36] Helmut von Moltke, quoted in H. Bengston, *Introduction to Ancient History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970), 36.

[37] Gilbert Murray cited by J. Muir, 'Religion and the New Education', in *Greek Religion*, 195.

[38] J. Goody, *Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge, 1977), 37, E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (London, 1915), 16, and Luria, *Language and Cognition*, 54.

tive whole, not those of particular individuals, are central. Thus, the products are collective memories that obscure the individual contribution, incorporating it into a body of transmitted custom.[39]

Appreciation of the original strength and on-going persistence of an oral mentality brings us closer to an understanding of Hellenic religious belief and practice. The other side of the coin–restricted literacy–furthers the same goal by defining what it was not. The characteristic features of religion that do not figure in ancient Greece include a class of priests devoting their lives to religious matters; a sacred book; dogma; conversion; martyrdom; preoccupation with sin; emphasis on humility, obedience, and abstinence.[40]

The most obvious consequence of restricted literacy was that ancient Greek religion was not associated with a canonical book.[41] Without writing there can be no sacred book with fixed dogma and exact definition of proper and improper behaviour; thus, non-textual religions tend to be flexible and ever-changing even to the point of tolerating inconsistencies or outright contradictions. Martyrdom and punishment for sinful action are less likely when rules are in constant flux than in cases where precise norms set standards of correct and incorrect conduct.

Writing acts as a distancing mechanism in several respects. While oral communication demands face-to-face meeting for participation in a shared belief, writing enables widespread involvement by individuals who never meet. Conversion is a characteristic of many religions of the book prompted, at least partly, by the distancing quality of writing.[42] Secondly, literate religions share a tendency for some individuals to know textual detail intimately, ensuring the preservation of the text from one generation to the next; in other

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[39] Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 108; Goody, *Domestication of the Savage Mind*, 27.

[40] W. Otto, *The Homeric Gods* (New York, 1954), 5: 'Greek religion stands diametrically opposed to that which has to this day constituted the gauge for religion in general.'

[41] J. Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge, 1986), especially chapter 1, 'The Word of God'. For a comparative discussion see W. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel* (Philadelphia, 1983).

[42] Goody, *Logic of Writing*, 172: 'For the written tradition articulates beliefs and interests in a semi-permanent form that can extend their influence independently of any particular political system. That is where the phenomenon of conversion comes into the picture . . . I am speaking of tendencies. Exceptions there will always be. Some religions of the Book are not religions of conversion; some cults in societies without writing may seek out adepts.'

words, there are specialists. For a non-literate community, knowledge of the norms is–in fact, must be–common to all.[43]

Finally, writing prompts a separation of religion from the larger context of a way of life, often termed decontextualisation. A set of beliefs preserved as a visible entity, it assumes a separate status within society, sundered from other aspects of societal life. The object can be studied, compared, corrected, and rejected. Some Greeks, like Xenophanes with whom we began, questioned the validity of usual beliefs even when they were widely held; yet growing doubts about the traditional conception of deity increased only in the late fifth century. It is not coincidental that a literate mentality was beginning to supersede oral communication at this very time.

Such characteristics are akin to our modern experience and definition of religion; they are 'normal'. The opposite characteristics are not; they are 'abnormal'. Putting Hellenic religion within its own context of, initially, complete orality and, later, residual orality should push us to adopt different adjectives, at the very least, and perhaps reach a more intimate understanding of the Greek deities.

[43] To be sure, there are specialists in religious remembrance in oral societies as the example of the Brahmin caste in India demonstrates. Certain families in early Greece may well have been special because of their ability to recount oral tradition in matters of religious practice–the very name of the Eumolpidai suggests the reasonableness of this conclusion. However, even these 'specialists' were not dedicated solely to a single aspect of communal life.

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

CHAPTER TWELVE

APTERA EPE–THE CANON OF MODERN GREEK ORAL POETRY

STATHIS GAUNTLETT

> Ever since I first visited Greece and made acquaintance with the spoken language, it has seemed to me a strange thing that so many scholars who go there to refresh themselves at the fount of Hellenism should spend their time contemplating the material ruins of antiquity without realising that the object of their quest still flows from the lips of the Greek people.
>
> George Thompson[1]

It would arguably be no less strange a thing if this volume on Greek orality and literacy omitted to consider what still flows from the lips of Greek people, even in the antipodes.[2] The more so as modern Hellenism with its 'residual orality and belated textuality'[3] is a particularly rich field for the study of interaction between orality and literacy, and as J.M. Foley has acknowledged: 'Scholarship on Byzantine and modern Greek has occupied pride of place in the expansion of Oral Theory since Lord first considered the *Digenis Akritas* epic in *The Singer of Tales*.'[4] Indeed, A.B. Lord returned in 1975 to give a boost to the neohellenic branch of oral theory by appealing to that ever productive desire to prove the continuity of Hellenism, with a demonstration of the metamorphosis of Homeric formula via mediaeval 'Akritic' poetry into fifteen-syllable iambic folksong verse of recent times.[5]

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[1] G. Thomson, 'The Continuity of Hellenism', *G&R*^{2} 18 (1971), 28.

[2] See A. Chatzinikolaou and S. Gauntlett, 'Greek-Australian Folklore' and 'Greek-Australian Folksong', in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore*, edd. G. Beed-Davey and G. Seal (Melbourne, 1993), 199-205.

[3] D. Tziovas, 'Residual Orality and Belated Textuality in Greek Literature and Culture', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 7 (1989), 321-35.

[4] J.M. Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988), 82.

5 In a paper presented at the joint session of the American Philological

This chapter explores a number of related paradoxes of scholarship on modern Greek oral poetry and its relation to ancient antecedents. The title *aptera epe* ('wingless words') signals the most striking of these paradoxes and certainly the most significant in terms of consequences for the discussion of Greek orality and literacy: the fact that much of the canon of modern Greek folk poetry normally used for the explication of oral composition in Greece ancient and modern is in reality only tenuously connected with orality, having typically been long since de-oralised, sanitised, homogenised, and subjected to other forms of adaptation for publication in print.

A second paradox is the double standard which privileges one medium of artificial preservation and commodification of oral poetry, commercial publication in print, over another, commercial sound recording. Commercial recordings of Greek folksongs form a readily available and abundant (though not unproblematic) source of oral performances; however, they have been ignored both as a source of texts for analysis and, more seriously, as an influential parallel development to the continuing 'primary' oral tradition.

A third paradox arises from the well known readiness of modern folklorists and classicists in Greece to view each other's discipline as mutually complementary, and provides the most expedient starting point for the exploration of all three paradoxes. It is a commonplace of the history of ideas in modern Greece that the discipline of Folklore (*Laographia*) was founded as a virtual branch of archaeology, the patriotic science *par excellence*;[6] the standard handbooks of Greek folklore still classify modern Greek folksongs as 'monuments of the word', as if milestones marking the rustic route back to Homer and beyond. The agenda for the study of modern Greek folk poetry was set accordingly, and the value of various types of traditional literature measured in proportion to their demonstrable proximity to antiquity: traditional genres more reminiscent of the Ottoman period, such as *rebetika* (songs of urban low-life), are disowned by official *Laographia*, while their proponents have sought to validate them by contrived invention of ancient antecedents.[7]

Association and the Modern Greek Studies Association in Washington, D.C., in December, 1975, and later published as 'Parallel Culture Traits in Ancient and Modern Greece', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 3 (1977), 71-80.

[6] M. Herzfeld, *Ours Once More. Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece* (New York, 1986), 11.

[7] S. Gauntlett, 'Orpheus in the Criminal Underworld. Myth in and about Rebetika', *Mandatoforos* 34 (1991), 8.

The corollary Greek practice of elucidating Homer by reference to much later hellenic folk culture and language is probably best known outside Greece from the mediaeval *scholia* of Eustathius, bishop of Thessaloniki, and from the work of the late J.Th. Kakrides of the University of Thessaloniki, whose *Homer Revisited* supplies numerous neohellenic insights into the artistic principles and social ethos of the ancient epics, ranging from double repetition and mistaken questions to godsent mists and the ungentlemanly practice of kick-starting one's travelling companion of a morning.[8]

To this day a major preoccupation of contributors to Homeric scholarship in Greece, particularly that intended for domestic consumption, is the patriotic enterprise of matching phrases, motifs and vocabulary items between the ancient epics and the canon of modern Greek folk poetry. An egregious recent exponent is I.K. Probonas of Athens University, whose two volumes of parallel passages aim to determine whether the tradition which preceded the Homeric epics disappeared after their production, by comparing the language, expression, and themes of Homer and modern Greek folksong.[9] A reviewer of the first volume proclaimed that it comprised yet another 'crushing riposte' to those Fallmerayerists who would dispute the continuity of Hellenism from antiquity to the present.[10] The fact that the second volume also contains a selection of essays by the author's undergraduate students on the admirable parallels enumerated in the first volume suggests that a further generation of scholars has already been prepared to continue this tradition of scholarship.

On the other hand, G.M. Sifakis of the University of Thessaloniki (and now of New York University) treated the same subject with far more circumspection in an article published in *Greece and Rome* titled 'Homeric Survivals in the Medieval and Modern Greek Folksong Tradition?'–as the question mark at the end of the title indicates.[11]

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[8] J.Th. Kakrides, *Homer Revisited* (Lund, 1970). The Greek version of this book, *Ξαναγυρίζοντας στον Όμηρο* (Thessaloniki, 1971), contains a wider range of examples.

[9] I.K. Probonas, *Τα Ομηρικά Έπη και το Νεοελληνικό Δημοτικό Τραγούδι*, 2 vols. (Athens, 1987 and 1989). Also I.E. Tsouderos, *Όμοια και Παράλληλα Φραστικά Συστήματα στα Ομηρικά Έπη και στο Νεοελληνικό Δημοτικό Τραγούδι* (Athens, 1976). The subtitle of the latter work, which translated reads 'the correct criteria for authenticity of Modern Greek folksong', reveals a further agenda.

[10] N. Kefaliniadis in *Ναξιακά* 4 (1988), reprinted in full in Probonas, *Τα Ομηρικά Έπη*, 2. 242-3.

[11] *G&R*[2] 39 (1992), 139-54.

Sifakis is careful to distinguish between evidence of continuity of Greek poetic tradition and mere evidence of continuity of the Greek language. He also judiciously reserves his verdict on the time-honoured practice of tracing the genealogy of modern Greek narrative ballads back to ancient Greek tragedy, pending further research on paratheatrical performance and popular entertainment in Hellenistic and Roman times.

This degree of reticence is exceedingly rare in such diachronic comparisons, and in the light of their generally unreserved readiness to connect Homer with modern Greek tradition, it is paradoxical that helladic Homericists and folklorists alike were remarkably slow to take up oral formulaic theory as expounded by Parry and Lord; at first sight it should be the analytical implement capable *par excellence* of linking ancient and modern oral Greek tradition. Kakrides had acknowledged the existence of oral theory as early as 1952, but rejected it.[12] 'Revisiting Homer' in 1970, he remained unconvinced of its value: 'we cannot possibly place Homer's work beside the improvised epics of the Yugoslavs' (*Homer Revisited*, 19). Kakrides' unreserved willingness to place Homer beside modern Greek improvisers might suggest that the ethnicity of Parry and Lord's respondents was the problem. C.A. Trypanis accepted oral formulaic theory unreservedly in respect of Homer and late Byzantine vernacular literature, but seems to have been similarly embarrassed when it came to specifying the 'other peoples' who developed quasi-Homeric techniques in their oral poetry.[13]

As late as 1978 Parry and Lord had yet to make an impact in Greece according to Professor Alke Kyriakidou-Nestoros, who expressed regret that no one had capitalised on the work of her father and predecessor in the chair of Folklore at the University of Thessaloniki–in his time, the chair of 'The Religion and Private Life of the Ancient Greeks, and of Folklore'–on the construction and origins of traditional Greek verse, in which formulaic technique had been described in all but name.[14] Her own lengthy review in Greek of Parry and Lord's *Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs* twenty years before had also apparently failed to provoke local interest in oral formulaic theory.[15]

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[12] Kakrides, *Homer Revisited*, 19.

[13] C.A. Trypanis, *Τα Ομηρικά Έπη* (Athens, 1975), 16-18.

[14] A. Kyriakidou-Nestoros, *Η Θεωρία της Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας* (Athens, 1978), 174.

[15] A. Kyriakidou-Nestoros, review of M. Parry and A. Lord, *Serbocroatian Heroic*

In fact an ambitious attempt to replicate the Parry-Lord Yugoslav epic-laboratory on Hellenic soil dates from the early 1950s, but originated outside Greece. The pioneer was Lord's Greek-American protégé J.A. Notopoulos, who undertook recording expeditions to Greek villages from Epirus to Cyprus and from Macedonia to Crete in 1953. A.B. Lord, who survived his student as well as his own teacher, recently paid generous tribute to Notopoulos' meticulous preparation for his mission and its enthusiastic execution.[16] But despite this and Notopoulos' own bold proclamation of the oral epic character of his material and the Homeric qualities of the immediately post-war society which had produced it,[17] the results of his expedition (ballads and concatenations of couplets of up to 500 lines) are not widely held to qualify for classification as oral epic.[18] Of course this in no way diminishes the intrinsic value of Notopoulos' field recordings, now stored, and since 1981 properly catalogued, in the Oral Literature Archive at Harvard; indeed, over thirty years four annotated LP records of great interest and exceptional quality for field-recordings have been published from the master recordings.[19]

In the wake of Notopoulos, various other attempts were made outside Greece to harness the Parry-Lord theory to Greek balladry, including a Greek-Australian composition about the dismissal of the Gough Whitlam Labor Government in November, 1975, ambitiously styled 'Folk epic from Melbourne'.[20] But the full benefit of oral formulaic theory did not begin to flow into the study of modern Greek folk poetry until it was applied across a broader gamut than just the heroic genres (*akritika*, *rizitika*, and *kleftika*) whose desultory,

Songs (Cambridge, Mass. and Belgrade, 1954), in *Ελληνικά* 16 (1958), reprinted in *eadem*, *Λαογραφικά Μελετήματα* (n.p., 1979), 163-70.

[16] A.B. Lord, 'James A. Notopoulos' (dated November, 1987), insert in the LP record *Greek Traditional Music*, 1. *Tunes and Songs of Crete from the J.A. Notopoulos Collection* (Crete University Press, 1988).

[17] J.A. Notopoulos, 'Modern Greek Heroic Oral Poetry and its Relevance to Homer', insert in the LP record *Modern Greek Heroic Oral Poetry Recorded by J. Notopoulos* (Folkways FE4468, New York, 1959).

[18] L. Duran, 'Greek Folk Music: A Selective and Annotated Discography', *Mandatoforos* 6 (1975), 17 and R.M. Beaton, 'The Oral Traditions of Modern Greece: A Survey', *Oral Tradition* 1 (1986), 124.

[19] In addition to the records mentioned in notes 16 and 17 above, *Folk Music of Modern Greece Recorded by J. Notopoulos 1952-3* (Folkways FE4454, New York, 1955), and *Folk Dances of Modern Greece Recorded by J. Notopoulos* (Folkways FE4467, New York, n.d.).

[20] P. Parkhill, 'Two Folk Epics from Melbourne', *Meanjin* 42 (1983), 120-39.

dramatic narrative and extensive ornamentation in performance condemns them to yield only short texts.[21]

Surveying the spectrum of modern Greek folk poetry for the inaugural issue of *Oral Tradition*, R.M. Beaton notes:

> The modern Greek 'demotic' tradition differs from the Parry/Lord model in two important respects: songs rarely exceed a hundred lines in length and in consequence elude the definition of 'epic narration', and the same thematic and formulaic corpus is equally employed in lyrical and in narrative genres.[22]

The latter respect is particularly significant, for it circumvents the problem posed by the former and yields a sizeable corpus of verses for formulaic analysis, a fact which Beaton had already exploited in his book *Folk Poetry of Modern Greece* in 1980. Beaton's analysis may have been limited by an ill-advised definition of formula as 'never more nor less than a half-line', but this does not vitiate several judicious conclusions drawn in his book, notably that:

> Oral composition-in-performance cannot be proved in the case of Greek songs, though it can certainly be inferred from the variations in recorded texts. In the absence of external indications to the contrary, one might suppose that, before they came to be written down by collectors and published, Greek demotic songs were indeed composed and transmitted orally, in a manner analogous, but not identical to that found in Yugoslav epic poetry.[23]

As Beaton acknowledges in chapter 9 of the book, there are indeed external indications to encourage speculation that bards of the Yugoslav variety existed among the Greeks in the Ottoman period,[24] but the totality of such evidence does not amount to anything comparable with the wealth of documentation available for some of

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[21] See S. Baud-Bovy, *Études sur la Chanson Cleftique* (Athens, 1958).

[22] Beaton, 'Oral Traditions of Modern Greece', 110-1.

[23] R.M. Beaton, *Folk Poetry of Modern Greece* (Cambridge, 1980), 36.

[24] An engraving by von Stackelberg depicts a blind bard being led around the bazaar of Corinth in 1812 by a boy strumming a long-necked lute: see F-M. Tsigakou, *The Rediscovery of Greece. Travellers and Painters of the Romantic Era* (London, 1981), 165. Admittedly, even assuming the veracity of this scene, there is no way of knowing what this Homer-look-alike might have been singing or in which language.

Greece's Balkan neighbours, as Sifakis notes with regret in his book *Για μια Ποιητική του Ελληνικού Δημοτικού Τραγουδιού* (*Towards a Poetics of Greek Folksong*),[25] the most satisfactory application to date of oral formulaic theory to Greek folksong, and the first of its kind in Greek.

Having reviewed Sifakis' book elsewhere at length,[26] I need mention here only a small selection of relevant innovations. First, Sifakis introduces Parry-Lord methodology to the Greek-reading public in combination with the rudiments of semiotics, in order to make an apposite equation of Parry's 'group of words used under the same metrical conditions' with a signifier, and the 'given essential idea' with its signified; together they constitute a poetic sign/formula. Unlike Beaton, Sifakis dwells at length on Lord's concept of the flexible pattern to explain the mechanism for limitless extemporisation of modern Greek formulae/signs. Having further redefined the concept of the variant in semiotic terms, Sifakis proceeds to an innovative proposal for the synoptic edition of variants of folksong verses in grid form, with corresponding thematic units arranged vertically on a paradigmatic axis, while the narrative proceeds horizontally along a syntagmatic axis. This arrangement is claimed to give the modern reader a tentative insight into the range of selection potentially available to members of the communities where the songs were recorded. It also makes for a far more active engagement of the reader with the folksong text than other editorial methods. Sifakis' *synekdosis* requires a polyptych page-format for even a short song, but for all the logistical drawbacks, which the compiler acknowledges, it is a refreshing innovation in the presentation of folksong verses to a reader and foreshadows some of the advantages of a future hypertext edition for use on a computer. However, in drawing texts from derivative print-anthologies, albeit two classic collections with scholarly intentions, the *synekdosis* also mixes the products of different collection and editorial practices; this a problem which bedevils the folklore scholarship of all but those who, like Notopoulos, took to the field at the supposed peak of the tradition.

Over the last sixty years the editors of modern Greek folksongs, from the earliest collection onwards, have regularly been berated for all kinds of violation of the texts they transcribed from performance

[25] G.M. Sifakis, *Για μια Ποιητική του Ελληνικού Δημοτικού Τραγουδιού* (Heraklion, 1988), 199-200.

[26] In *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 11 (1993), 305-9.

or dictation (usually without specifying which). Thus in the 1820s Fauriel infamously allowed linguistic purists to tamper with the morphology of the texts which he collected from expatriate Greeks, a later anthologist removed an allusion to homosexuality from an heroic brigand song, a third expurgated traces of sacrilege, while a fourth converted a song about the fall of Constantinople into an expression of contemporary irredentism simply by changing the person of a possessive pronoun. Most notoriously N.G. Polites, the patriarch of Greek folklore scholarship, made a collage of the 'best' verses selected from variant versions.[27] But for all the regular rehearsal of these transgressions, derivative anthologies continue to include these texts to this day whether *faute de mieux* or, as in one known instance, because the aesthetic qualities of the emendations or recensions override the anthologist's scruples.[28] Conversion of the melodic speech of performance into the printed word has also involved arbitrary appropriation of the aural to the visual, not to mention the homogenisation of lyrics-as-performed into poetic 'clear text', stripped of extra-metrical syllables, expletives and repetitious ornamentation in which traditional performance of Greek folksong is so rich–but these violations have attracted less controversy.

The problems flowing from all these editorial practices are particularly acute for any attempt to infer the principles of oral composition from the printed, rationalised texts which form the canon of Modern Greek oral poetry. It could be argued that the ability of the underlying system to show through layers of editorial vandalism and intersemiotic violence demonstrates *a fortiori* the validity of the poetics uncovered by formulaic analysis, but such a claim surely begs the question of the legitimacy of application of Parry-Lord methodology to non-epic verse of uncertain orality. One cannot be certain that the features revealed are not due to factors other than the dynamics of oral tradition and improvised composition-in-performance in a putative age of primary orality.

If literacy led to the textualisation and commodification of folk-

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[27] See Kyriakidou-Nestoros, *Η Θεωρία της Ελληνικής Λαογραφίας*, 96; G. Veloudis, '*Νοθεία και παραχάραξη του δημοτικού τραγουδιού*', *Προτάσεις* (Athens, 1981), 100-7; Herzfeld, Ours Once More, 39-42, 130-5; A. Politis, '*Για μια ιστορία της νοθείας των δημοτικών τραγουδιών*', *Όψεις της Λαϊκής και της Λόγιας Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας* (Thessaloniki, 1994), 95-109. On editorial vandalism suffered by British folksong see D. Harker, *Fakesong. The Manufacture of British 'Folksong' 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes, 1985).

[28] G. Ioannou, *Τα Δημοτικά μας Τραγούδια* (Athens, 1966), 15.

song text, sound recording ('electric writing' as McLuhan styled it) has not merely facilitated scholars' field-recordings of folksong, but has also made possible a mass trade in its sung performance. Yet hardly any attention has been paid to the continuing oral career of modern Greek folksong in commercial recording over almost exactly a hundred years, during which time recordings of Greek folksong have been mass-produced, distributed across the globe, and reproduced in an infinite number of new contexts through a variety of mechanical and electrical devices.[29] The implications of these media of transmission and forms of commodification for the folksong text, its tradition, its standards of performance, and audience expectations have not been considered, even though they must also have consequences for their contemporary 'primary' oral tradition of supposedly non-commercial texts, deemed to have been composed in performance (or dictation) whence they have been transcribed, printed, and accepted for scholarly analysis.[30] The power of technology to determine the aesthetics of performance can be seen when even veteran Greek performers, reared on the three- or four-minute 'single', are given the opportunity to improvise at length in 'long-playing' format: they typically subdivide the time available into three-minute segments or perform loosely connected medleys of items of that length.[31]

The technologising of Greek oral poetry has not stopped with the gramophone: videoclips and compact discs have supplanted vinylite discs and electronic corpora of Greek folksong, including multimedia *CD-ROM*s, are also in prospect.[32] While they cannot restore wings to the de-oralised texts currently forming the canon, the capacity of these media to make conveniently available to the study of Greek folk poetry an element of orality and performance-context is to be welcomed.

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[29] For a critical discography see Duran, 'Greek Folk Music'. The earliest known commercial recording of Greek song was made in New York in May, 1896, and from the first decade of the twentieth century British and German companies had technicians travelling the Levant recording Greek folksongs for manufacture of 78 rpm discs in their respective countries and export to Greece or the Greek diaspora: see S. Gauntlett, D. Paivanas, and A. Chatzinikolaou, '*Corpus rebeticorum*: A Preview', *Modern Greek Studies (Australia and New Zealand)* 2 (1994), 43.

[30] The consequences for the genre rebetika are discussed in Gauntlett *et al.*, '*Corpus rebeticorum*', 44-5.

[31] For example, *Epirotika with Periklis Halkias*—supervising ethnomusicologist S. Chianis (Folkways FSS 34024 & 34025, New York, 1981).

[32] See Gauntlett *et al.*, '*Corpus rebeticorum*', 39-59.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ORALITY AND LITERACY IN THE POETIC TRADITIONS OF ARCHAIC GREECE AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

RICHARD WHITAKER

A particular problem facing Classical scholars in the debate about the manner in which archaic Greek poetry was composed, is that they have been almost forced to accept the Parry-Lord South Slavic model of oral poetry, and its relations with literacy, since no other has been put forward. In this paper I want to offer the example of a completely different oral-literate tradition, that of the *iimbongi*, or praise singers of Southern Africa.[1]

1

Those who watched on TV, in early 1994, the inauguration of the new President of South Africa, Mr. Nelson Mandela, may have seen next to him a man who was dressed in skins, with two flags of the new South Africa flying from his animal-skin hat, and who declaimed loudly into the microphone. This was the *imbongi*, the praise singer, Zolani Mkiva, a contemporary representative of an old and widespread tradition.

Within Southern Africa *izibongo*, praise poetry, has been practised especially by Nguni-speakers, that is, people belonging to the Xhosa and Zulu language-groups. I would like briefly to describe this tradition. Nguni praise poetry is built up essentially from a sys-

[1] In my description of this tradition I draw particularly on the work of T. Cope, ed., *Izibongo: Zulu Praise Poems* (Oxford, 1968), J. Opland, *Xhosa Oral Poetry* (Cambridge, 1983), D. Rycroft and A. Ngcobo, *The Praises of Dingana (izibongo zikaDingana)* (Pietermaritzburg, 1988), and R. Kaschula, 'The Transitional Role of the Xhosa Oral Poet in Contemporary South Africa', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1990–published work by Kaschula drawing on the thesis includes 'The Role of the Xhosa Oral Poet in Contemporary South African Society', *South African Journal of African Languages* 11 (1991), 47-54 and '*Imbongi* in Profile', *English in Africa* 20 (1993), 65-76.

tem of names. To praise someone is to fix his or her identity by a word or, more often, a brief description–usually flattering, but not necessarily so. An ordinary individual may have only a single short praise–indicating some action, achievement, or moral or physical characteristic–which can be used as an alternative name for him or her. (For example, the first missionary among the Xhosa acquired the praise name *Nyengana*, referring to his shining bald head. Some fairly elaborate examples of praise names can be seen in lines 42-79 of the poem printed in the appendix.) If the individual in time gathers several praises, they will be strung together to constitute a brief praise-poem, which may then be passed on in the oral tradition.

In traditional Nguni society it was above all the locus of power within that society, the chief, who was the recipient of praises, and these were far more substantial than those of an ordinary person. (The praises of great Zulu chiefs, such as Shaka and Dingana, run into several hundreds of lines each.) Interestingly, and quite logically, as the power and prestige of chiefs were compromised under *apartheid*, so the *iimbongi* began to detach themselves from the chiefs and to praise those whom they regarded as their real representatives. Thus a whole new body of praise poetry has come into existence, directed now at political groupings such as the ANC and its leaders, and at the trade unions.[2]

Before the arrival of European settlers in South Africa and the coming of writing, *izibongo* existed within a purely oral milieu. However, as more and more Nguni-speakers have become literate and urbanised, so the tradition of praise poetry has come to participate in the complex interplay between the written and oral modes.[3] Southern African scholars of Nguni praise poetry, who are aware of the work of the Parry-Lord school, have studied this interplay in some detail. I believe that their findings can help to illuminate the situation of archaic Greek poetry.[4]

[2] See the collection of trade union praise poetry in A. Sitas, ed., *Black Mamba Rising* (Durban, 1986) and Kaschula, 'Transitional Role', chaps. 4 and 5.

[3] J. Opland, 'The Transition from Oral to Written Literature in Xhosa (1823-1909)', in *Oral Tradition and Literacy*, edd. R. Whitaker and E. Sienaert (Durban, 1986), 135-50 and T. Cope, 'Literacy and the Oral Tradition: The Zulu Evidence', *ibid.*, 151-60.

[4] Besides the literature cited above see also R. Whitaker, 'Pindar und die südafrikanischen *Iimbongi*-Sänger. Zwei Traditionen von Preisdichtung', and D. Lombard, 'Das Preisen bei den Zulus–Transformationen innerhalb einer mündlichen Tradition. Lehrt diese Tradition etwas für Homer?', in *Vermittlung und Tradierung von Wissen in der griechischen Kultur*, edd. W. Kullmann and J. Althoff (Tübingen, 1993), 111-28 and 87-110, respectively.

2

What the Nguni material clearly shows us is that it is dangerous to generalise about 'oral poetry' and 'the oral poet' from the evidence of a single tradition, as Parry and Lord tended to do; and it shows us that the interaction between orality and literacy is an enormously complex process, with a great variety of manifestations. Since it is still Lord's *Singer of Tales* which provides, for many Classical scholars, their model of what oral poetry is, and its relation to literacy, I will test some of Lord's generalisations against the facts of the Nguni tradition.

First, as is well known, Lord erected a rigid barrier between oral and written composition.[5] He stated that when the singer learned to write, this quickly weakened his capacity to compose and perform as an oral poet. Now, that may have been the case among the South Slavs (probably because their oral tradition had, by the 1930s, been marginalised by a literate culture),[6] but the generalisation is certainly not borne out by research among the Nguni. As the authority on Xhosa oral poetry, Jeff Opland, states: 'Empirical evidence demonstrates that among the Cape Nguni the ability to write does not operate in opposition to the ability to produce oral poetry'.[7] And here is an extract from an interview Kaschula held with the Rev. L. Xozwa, an oral composer who also writes poetry:

> KASCHULA: When you begin writing down your poetry, do you think that you could ever lose that ability to improvise spontaneously?
> XOZWA: Never, no, never.
> KASCHULA: You have a gift?
> XOZWA: It is inspired by God, it is a gift.
> KASCHULA: So the fact that you write it down will not affect the oral part of it?
> XOZWA: Yes.[8]

Opland and Kaschula can cite many examples of poets who are lit-

[5] A.B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), chap. 6.
[6] This point was made by A. Parry, 'Have we Homer's *Iliad*?', *YCS* 20 (1966), 177-216, on pp. 212 ff.
[7] Opland, *Xhosa Oral Poetry*, 233.
[8] R. Kaschula, 'New Wine in Old Bottles: Some Thoughts on the Orality-Literacy Debate, with Specific Reference to the Xhosa *Imbongi*', in *Oral Tradition and Innovation*, edd. E. Sienaert *et al.* (Durban, 1991), 120-42.

erate, sometimes university-educated, who are nevertheless still capable of performing as powerfully as any traditional oral poet. The most outstanding instance is David Manisi. He is a literate, educated man, who has published several volumes of Xhosa poems, some written in Western style, others in traditional style. But he still also performs with great success as an *imbongi*. The same is true of Sipho Burns-Ncamashe, a university graduate, who also writes and composes orally. In contemporary practice in Southern Africa, then, literacy by no means weakens the capacity for oral composition.

Second, Lord, at least in 1960, was quite confident that firm distinctions could be drawn between literate and oral poetic texts, and he denied the existence of 'transitional texts' which would display characteristics of both types of composition. Lord expressed himself somewhat ambiguously on this topic, but his position would seem to be as follows. He allows that there may be oral poets who write their compositions down, and literate poets who imitate some of the techniques of oral composition. What he refuses to allow is that there may be poets steeped in an oral tradition who are nevertheless literate and who can produce, in writing, texts which are in some respects oral and traditional, but which in other respects show signs of written composition. Thus Lord writes:

> Once the oral technique is lost, it is never regained. The written technique, on the other hand, is not compatible with the oral technique, and the two could not possibly combine, to form another, a third, a 'transitional' technique.[9]

But if we test Lord's assertion here against the complex reality of Nguni oral-literate poetry, it seems far too categorical. Contemporary Nguni poetry occupies a whole range of positions between literacy and orality; and, as is the case with every oral tradition once

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[9] Lord, *Singer of Tales*, 129. Elsewhere in the same book Lord expresses himself more ambiguously: 'A poem is either of the oral tradition or it is not . . . It seems to me that there can be no compromise or middle ground, although there will be texts that may *look* transitional, cases in which we simply do not have enough information to tell' (p. 298 n. 9, his italics). Also: 'Much of the outward mechanics of the oral style . . . persisted in written poetry, and thus the boundary between the two became and remained blurred to all but the initiate. One should not, however, mistake ambivalence for transition. We know now that the author . . . of the "transitional" has already crossed the border from oral to written' (p. 220). Lord slightly modified his view in his later writings: see John Foley's survey of Lord's work in *Oral Traditional Literature*, ed. J. Foley (Columbus, Ohio, 1981), 32-51, and Lord's 'Perspectives on Recent Work on the Oral Traditional Formula', *Oral Tradition* 1 (1986), 467-503–but he did not fundamentally change it.

it has come into contact with literacy, one can no longer talk of 'pure' oral poetry–all of it is affected in one way or another by the presence of writing and print. I would like to look at this in a little more detail. We can distinguish three types of Nguni oral poetic texts in contemporary South Africa.[10]

(1) ORALLY-COMPOSED 'TEXTS'

Firstly there is that class of Nguni poetic texts which we might think of as the most 'oral'. These are texts directly transcribed from oral-composition-in-performance, constituting just the verbal part of a larger whole. It seems to make no difference to the *style* of the text in such cases whether the poet is literate or illiterate. The style remains impromptu, spontaneous.

However, even texts of this type are not unaffected by the presence of literacy.[11] The *iimbongi* quite often refer in their oral performances to the processes of writing and print. Here, for example, are lines from *izibongo* in praise of Nelson Mandela, when he visited the Transkei in 1990, shortly after his release from prison: 'People who are brainy have written books that have been read' (line 19); and 'No this truth won't be needed anymore,/ Yes writers write it down and print it' (lines 26-7).[12] The performer is Bongani Sithole, who, although he is literate, never writes his poetry down.

[10] I had already worked out this scheme of classification for myself when I came across a similar one put forward by a practising *imbongi*, Monde Mothlabane (as reported by Kaschula, 'Transitional Role', 199). He distinguishes: '(a) *imbongi Zomthonyama*. This is the traditional imbongi who only produces oral spontaneous poetry. Such a person would not necessarily have been exposed to the dynamics of education. (b) *iimbongi Zosiba*. This is the imbongi who writes his poetry, an educated man. (c) There is also a group of iimbongi today who operate within both these paradigms. In fact, it would appear that today many iimbongi are in the position to produce oral as well as written poetry'. The difference, however, between this scheme and mine, is that mine focuses more on the *product*, the poems produced, rather than on the producers.

[11] One must agree with J. Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge, 1987), 114: 'Writing may affect the procedures (that is, the cognitive operations) and the content of the knowledge of individuals in a society even though they are unable to read, let alone write'.

[12] Kaschula, 'Transitional Role', 267. Cf. also David Manisi, in an improvised performance: 'We're thankful, we of the Xhosa,/ For the arrival of Ross and Bennie/ Who ignited the mind of the Xhosa/ On the day they first wrote down the language,/ The unshakable language of Xhosa.' The text of this performance by Manisi may be found in the booklet published with the video *Zulu and Xhosa Izibongo* (1986), issued by the Oral Documentation and Research Centre of the University of Natal, Durban.

The general content too of the *imbongi*'s poem may be influenced by something that he has read. Thus in an interview with Kaschula the praiser, Daniel Songwiqi, tells how a particular performance of his drew on the Freedom Charter, a printed document.[13]

(2) Written 'Oral Texts'

Secondly, there are texts which are *written* by literate Nguni poets in the traditional oral style. These are often indistinguishable from the poet's orally-composed work. Here is Opland (writing about the poetry of David Manisi):

> A comparison of Manisi's traditional written poetry and his oral poetry . . . reveals a network of phrases lines and passages in common. It is not easy to declare whether these repetitions are conscious premeditations for written compositions that find their way thence into his oral poetry, or whether they derive from the exigencies of his oral performances, which he recognizes as such and works into his writing in imitation of his oral style; the existence of these common elements *does serve to make his written poetry generally indistinguishable in style and diction from his oral poetry.*[14]

Lord would classify poetry of this type as essentially oral, and I would agree, because even though it is written its style is much more influenced by oral tradition than by writing; what the poet is doing here is to compose orally in his head, imagining an audience, but writing his composition down. The *imbongi* Ncamashe testifies to this in an interview with Opland:

> OPLAND: When you write traditional poetry, do you write it as if you were bongaing [praising]?
> NCAMASHE: Yes, that is true. In fact I don't think it is possible to write it outside that spirit, if I might so say, because I see myself saying this, but instead of saying it I write it. That is actually how I choose to put it.[15]

[13] Kaschula, 'Transitional Role', 150.
[14] Opland, *Xhosa Oral Poetry*, 106 (my italics).
[15] Opland, *Xhosa Oral Poetry*, 98.

(3) Transitional Texts

But there does also exist a type of Nguni text for which (*pace* Lord) no other name than 'transitional' seems appropriate. To me this type is of especial interest, since–obviously *mutatis mutandis*–it seems to come closest to the character of much archaic Greek poetry. The great advantage for us of the Nguni material is that we know about the circumstances of its composition, we can see precisely how the oral and the written come together in it.

I would like to analyse here a performance of just such a transitional text, reproduced in the appendix.[16] The performer was a Zulu, Mr. Mbutho, who had been a teacher, but later went into business. As he tells it on the video, one day, after a long period of severe nervous irritation, he felt suddenly calm. He found himself thinking about the way prominent figures in the Zulu community were being neglected, so he sat down to write a letter to the newspaper. The words poured out, but he soon realised that what he was writing was not actually a letter at all. What came out was a poem–the only one he ever composed[17]–in praise of Zulu royalty and of the cultural movement, Inkatha. Mr. Mbutho subsequently performed this poem at meetings all over the province of Natal. The performance transcribed and translated in the appendix took place on an evening of the conference 'Oral Tradition and Literacy: Changing Visions of the World', held at the University of Natal, Durban, in 1985.

I find in this poem a thorough blending of the literate and oral traditional modes. Let us look at these in detail.

Oral Traditional Elements

(i) The circumstances of composition: Mr. Mbutho composed his poem almost by accident, hardly knowing consciously what he was doing. This is very like the oral praiser, who often, after his performance, does not know at all what he has said. Thus in an interview Bongani Sithole affirms: 'When you ask me to repeat what I have just produced, I do not know it. I only remember two or three words, it is lost, you cannot say that I should repeat it in the same

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[16] The text, together with a video recording of the performance, both form part of the 1986 publication, details of which are given above in note 12.

[17] Compare the poet Tunnichos in Plato's *Ion* 534d: he only ever composed one poem that anyone remembered, but that poem was on everyone's lips.

way as I produced it initially'.[18] In this respect the *iimbongi* remind one very strongly of the rhapsodes represented in Plato's *Ion*, or the poets to whom Socrates says he spoke in the *Apology* (22 a-c), who said many fine and wonderful things in their poems, but could give no account afterwards of what they had said.

(ii) Manner of performance: here we should note the fact that the poem was shaped for oral delivery, and was in fact so communicated at meetings all over Natal. The style of the performance on the video, rapid and difficult to follow, is very similar to that of the tradition oral *imbongi*.

(iii) Style:

(a) Mr. Mbutho opens in traditional oral style with the royal salute.

(b) There are many instances of typically oral repetition. In lines 7-11 and 15-21 we find 'won over' twice, then 'And won over' three times, followed by 'It has won over . . .' seven times. This is in fact a traditional formula (usually translated 'devoured' or 'ate up') used in praises which register the conquests of chiefs, such as Shaka or Dingana; but now the formula is used of a political organisation, Inkatha.

(c) We should note the use also of balancing, parallel constructions. In lines 35-8 we get the repeated structure: verb/'about it'/subject. And there is a series of parallel sections from lines 42-87, each of which invokes a great Zulu chief of the past, and begins 'Arise!', with one more repetition of 'arise' in the body of each section.

(d) The exhortatory quality of the poem, especially lines 33 ff. and 112 ff., is typical of this oral tradition.

(iv) Content:

(a) Mr. Mbutho is clearly steeped in Zulu oral tradition.[19] In lines 8 ff., as noted above, he uses the very common traditional formula 'won over . . .'

(b) He also makes abundant use of praises, especially in the central part of the poem, lines 42-87, which consists of selected praises of great Zulu chiefs; this is pure oral traditional material. But elsewhere too we find praises of traditional form applied to new objects; for example, 'praises of Inkatha' (23 ff.).

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[18] Kaschula, 'Transitional Role', 217.

[19] In the introductory remarks which he makes before his performance, Mr. Mbutho states explicitly that he draws his knowledge of traditional Zulu praises and their style not from any reading but from his experience of the oral tradition.

(c) There is also abundant use of animal imagery (1, 5, 30, etc.), a typical feature of the Nguni oral tradition.

Literate Elements

On the other hand many features of the performance, the content, the style, and general outlook of the poem, clearly depend on writing and derive from the world of literacy. I find it very interesting that many of these elements seem to have asserted themselves almost despite the poet, who claims to have exercised very little conscious control.

(i) Performance: very significant here is the fact that poet *reads* his text from a typed version, sticking very closely to it. Clearly, the idea of a fixed text, with the particular structure that he has given to it through writing, is important to him. (The performances of the three poets on the video in fact provide a fascinating spectrum of oral-literate contrasts. The first provided a text to the audience, but did not have it in front of him, and deviated substantially from it in performance. Mr. Mbutho, as we have seen, kept very closely to his text. The last poet, David Manisi, had no text; he composed in performance.)

(ii) Content:

(a) The acronyms in lines 15-17, dependent on the alphabet, are a clear literate element.

(b) We have also the identifying of a specific date by the Julian calendar, in line 74.

(c) Several references are made to writing and print: 38-9, 93, and 98. (Note the nice combination in 93 of oral and literate, 'tongue and pen'.)

(iii) Style: Mr. Mbutho's composition displays a much greater degree of Western-style structure and development than the orally improvised praise poem. His poem consists of three sections (which I have labelled A, B, C) making up a ring-composition, and balanced by the fact that each section ends with exhortation (one should note that ring-composition is not a feature of the Nguni oral tradition):

(A) 1-41. Here we get a sketch of the rise of Inkatha, chronologically arranged, from its founding by King Solomon in 1924, followed by a period of dormancy, to its reestablishment in 1975, and its past and present successes. (Mbutho, from his royalist position, represents it as if it were the present King of the Zulus who led the

revival, whereas in fact it was Buthelezi, establishing his own power-base over against the king.) This is followed by comment and exhortation.

(**B**) 42-87. The central section is made up of traditional praises of leaders of the Zulu nation, in reverse chronological order: Solomon (42-8)–Cetshwayo (49-56)–Mpande (57-65)–Dingana (66-74)–Shaka (75-8). Again, so far as this tradition is concerned, this is a literate conception. Another striking sign of literate ordering here is the fact that all these sections are of similar length (with the exception of the last one, to which a passage of exhortation has been added). This is not to say that a purely oral poet would be incapable of such balancing, only that this kind of symmetry is very untypical of the Nguni oral tradition.

(**C**) 88-118. Similarly to section A, these lines sketch the cultural and political development of the Zulus chronologically, from the time of Shaka and of King Solomon up to the present, ending again with exhortation.

General Outlook

I make just one point under this rather vague heading. The kind of self-reflexiveness we find in lines 88-91, where the poet reflects explicitly on the function of his own poem, seems more a characteristic of written than of oral poetry, at least within this culture.

In Mr. Mbutho's composition, then, we have a text which seems to partake in good measure of both orality and literacy–a text composed rapidly, and performed, in the traditional oral style, but fixed in writing and influenced by the structure of written texts. It is, I think, despite Lord, a true transitional text.

3

I would like now to raise explicitly some difficult questions which I have so far skirted around. I have talked of the effects of writing and literacy upon the previously oral poetry of the Nguni, and I have claimed to find some 'written' features in the poem just analysed. But more precision is needed here. What exactly do we mean by 'the effects of literacy' or 'written features'? And, in the case of written or printed Nguni texts, are any putative literate elements detectable purely by analysis of the texts themselves, or do we need

knowledge of the circumstances of composition? Clearly, the answers to these questions have important implications for study of the oral-literate interface in archaic Greek poetry.

In reply, one needs first of all to insist very strongly on the point that *'literacy' is not an innocent self-explanatory concept*–as has recently been emphasised by several authors writing on questions of orality and literacy.[20] The skills of reading and writing are not simply 'introduced' into a culture; they come into a very specific social context, and often carry with them considerable ideological baggage. In Southern Africa literacy was brought to, sometimes imposed on, the indigenous oral peoples by an overwhelmingly dominant culture, with centuries of sophisticated technological development behind it. Literacy was associated with progress and civilisation; the oral was regarded as primitive, heathen, and inferior. For many decades virtually all that was available for newly-literate Nguni-speakers to read was either English literature or didactic and religious material written by missionaries in the indigenous languages, obviously with a strong Western bias. Thus, in becoming literate Nguni people were not just acquiring a skill, but were also absorbing the form and structure of what was written by members of the dominant culture.[21]

Not surprisingly, then, the detectable effect of literacy on poetry produced by Nguni-speakers is seen in the use of foreign structural elements, which they drew from the only material available to them for reading. The earliest published Nguni poetry displays foreign features such as rhyme and stanzaic structure, and a vague Romantic sensibility.[22] Nguni texts of this kind were very obviously composed in writing; one would know this even without being aware of the cir-

[20] See R. Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality* (Oxford, 1988), W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), and R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992).

[21] A very telling example: in an interview with Kaschula ('Transitional Role', 199) the *imbongi*, Monde Mothlabane, who frequently composes in performance, but also writes poems, testifies to the difference that writing makes to his composition: 'Ndiyayibhala ndize ndiyihlole kwangokwam. So, encwadini kufuneka noko ibe *structured*–'I write it, then arrange it. So in a book it is necessary for it to be structured.' Mothlabane cannot express his specific meaning here in Xhosa, and so uses an English word; clearly what he is saying is that in *writing* his work he is arranging it in accordance with Western norms, in accordance with what is meant by the English word 'structure'. A similar phenomenon is described by Burns-Ncamashe, in an interview with Jeff Opland (*Xhosa Oral Poetry*, 98): 'You see, in writing Western style, you think, you calculate, you measure, as it were, but in one's own traditional method that doesn't come into the picture at all.'

[22] See the works of Opland and Cope, cited in note 3 above.

cumstances of composition. It is only later, as they begin to decolonise their minds, that Nguni-speakers begin to write poetry in traditional style, with traditional content. In some cases writing has no apparent effect on texts of this kind, and without knowing the circumstances we would simply be unable to tell whether the text was composed orally or through writing (these are texts of the second type discussed above). In others, the effects *are* apparent, but are simply matters of content, and are not necessarily unique to written texts (the allusions to writing and print, for example, which we saw in the improvised poetry of Bongani Sithole). The most significant effect, I think, and one which is unique to what I have classified as 'transitional' texts, is the striving after a Western type of structure and balance within a poem which is in many respects close to the oral tradition (as in Mr. Mbutho's text). Would we be able to conclude that these transitional texts were composed through writing if we had only the bare text and knew very little about its social and historical context? I must say that I very much doubt it.

Thus the effects of literacy on the Southern African oral tradition turn out to be quite specific, determined by a particular cultural context. This does not mean that the tradition cannot be used for comparative purposes, but it should cause us to pay keen attention to the social and historical factors at work in the tradition with which comparison is being made.

4

What lessons can the Nguni material teach us about the oral-literate tradition of archaic Greece? I would like to make just three points in conclusion. First, this material greatly sharpens our awareness of the peculiar character of the Greek tradition. It is an obvious but sometimes neglected point that, in the eighth century, when the alphabet was invented and used for the first time to write Greek, it had neither a long tradition of written literature nor any of the associations of a dominant culture attaching to it–as it almost always did when it was used in later periods of history to write other languages. To put it crudely: the first Greek who learned the alphabet had nothing to read. On the contrary, in archaic Greece the culture to which all the power and prestige belonged, was the oral one; throughout most of this period there was no tradition other than the oral to which poets

could turn for inspiration and material, nor any audience other than listeners to whom they could address themselves.

Second, and closely related to the first point: when one considers how tenaciously orality has maintained itself in Southern Africa, in the face of modernisation and a dominant culture of writing, it seems almost certain that oral composition of poetry must have been practised for a very long time in ancient Greece, right down into the classical period and beyond. And the comparative material would suggest that there was a wide variety of oral-literate practice: poets who were only oral, poets who composed mainly orally but sometimes committed their work to writing, poets who mostly wrote, but always for performance; and alongside these the rhapsodes, who performed the works of others.

Third and finally, the Nguni material severely undermines one's confidence that one can by mere analysis of any particular text decide whether it was composed orally or in writing. In respect of the Nguni tradition one can be sure of this only where there is clear evidence of the influence of foreign, that is, Western forms; or where we have external evidence about the composition of the text. In archaic Greece literacy did not arrive imbedded in a developed foreign literature, but evolved *within* a tradition which inevitably therefore retained a large 'oral residue'. Thus it is virtually impossible to say what are specifically *literate* features in the poetry of this period. Further, we have virtually no independent evidence about the way poetry was composed during this time. It seems to me, therefere, that although many archaic Greek texts display oral features, we can never know for any particular one whether the author originally wrote it or composed it in performance. Perhaps, as Thomas has suggested,[23] we have been asking the wrong questions about this literature, and we need to move away from a preoccupation with questions of style and manner of composition, towards a study of performance and its context, and the relationship between audience and performer.

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[23] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, chap. 3.

APPENDIX

ROYAL SALUTE

composed and performed by Mr. C.D.S. Mbutho

WENA WENDLOVU! WENA WENDLOVU! BAYEDE!
(CHILD OF THE ELEPHANT! CHILD OF THE ELEPHANT! BAYEDE)

A

We salute you, Tiger of Ndaba,
Solomon son of Dinuzulu, for inaugurating
The Inkatha Liberation and Cultural Movement,
Which the Ancestral Spirits briefly shed for $\pm$ 40 years,
To allow the Bullock of Mnyamana of Ngquengeleke to grow up,
Which now leads bloodless national campaigns into freedom.

It has already won over the support of the urban Townships,
'Cause it has won over Ngobese (Mayor) of Umlazi,
And won over Dlomo of Kwamashu,
And won over the self professed bearded leader of Clermont,
And won over Gambushe of Port Natal,
And last but not least Nene of Mpumalanga in Hammarsdale.

It is still proceeding with the winning over of
All sections of the community into the Movement,
'Cause it has won over a teachers' organisation NATU,
It has won over a Ministers' organisation IDAMASA,
It has won over a Traders' organisation INYANDA,
It has won over lawyers and doctors among professionals,
It has won over our youth and our women folk,
It has won over chiefs and their councillors,
And lastly won over the rest of the vulgus.

Mageba, we repeat and say, we are pleased with the Movement,
The drug concoction that will confound our bewitchers,
The great herbal mixture called 'Blinder of enemy forces',
All those who will be treated with it,
Will have their knees strengthened and their eyes opened.

So declared Henry Sibisi,
Son of Bhovungana of Nomashingila and said,
You would have to be treated with the serum of Sir
Theophilus Shepstone,
The snake that bit great King Cetshwayo son of Mpande,
Thus crippling the Zulu nation so effectively,
That even today the Zulu nation still lies suffering from that poison.

So on your knees my people, lick this serum,
Join Inkatha Movement;
Preach about it, oh ministers!
Teach about it, oh teachers!
Announce about it, oh chiefs!
Write about it you book writers,
And likewise you journalists and newspaper reporters,
'Cause if even one in millions should miss this news,
National advancement would be crippled and failed.

B

Arise from the dead, oh great son of Menzi,
Who drinks sour milk with a thorn (straw)
Remover of a drug cauldron from the hut of Ntuzwa,
Arise great Lion of 'Kwadlamahlahla' royal kraal,
You who inherited nothing but grief and strife,
That had plagued great King Dinuzulu of Usuthu
And the whole Zulu nation.

Arise, Thunder from nowhere, among thorn veld trees,
Branchlet smother the fire lit by Mantshonga and Gqelemana;
Arise great Lion of 'Ulundi' royal kraal,
Appear even as a symbolic snake and satisfy us,
Because members of the royal family are present here,
The whole Zulu nation is here,
Please show yourself, oh King!
We say 'Bayede', son of the heavens.

Arise, Msimude who appeared by his head gear,
'Midst the British and Boer invaders,
The swallow that disappeared into the heavens,
The last-comer in line after King Shaka,
Arise great Lion of 'Nodwengu' royal kraal,
You saved yourself from the wrath of your brothers,
By pretending to be a fool,
Thus you saved us those knees, and seed,
That have preserved the genealogy of the Zulu kings.

Arise, Vezunonyanda, the darer,
Who dared into the precincts of Bulawayo,
And who was hauled down precipitous mountains;
Vezi, of Simanganyawo,
Black Mbomboshe,
Arise great Lion of 'Mgungundlovu' royal kraal,
You who once stirred trouble with the Boers
In defence of your kingdom,
And ended by making history on December 16.

Arise Dlungwane son of Ndaba,
You stood shoulder high among jostling huts until dawn,
Arise you who outwitted and outmanoeuvred everyone else,
Great Lion who founded and ruled the Zulu nation,
We say rise and confront this horrible 'Dilemma',
This senseless destruction of black by black,
Because men maliciously smell one another,
Attacking each other with battle axes,
Shooting each other with fire arms,
Burning down one another's kraal,
Sniping at each other even at places of work.
Oh what has happened? What is the real bone of contention?
Save us, oh Sangoma!

C

We are thankful for the gift of the Zulus
Of preserving their history by the kings' praises and poems,
That cause Zulus to remember
King Shaka's words and deeds;
Oh, what would the world say, if UBHEJANA (THE KING)
Could unite his people with his tongue and pen?
That would be the fulfilment of the wishes
Of his grandfather 'Maphumzana' (King Solomon)
Who died having warned his people that
No more should his warriors fight on battle fields,
But if only they could learn to read and write,
Only then would they be able to face their enemies.

It is now as you commanded, Oh calf of the Elephant,
The young Tiger now reigning,
Which I fear to call by name, or even to look at,
Now watches his Legislative Assembly from a vantage position,
Engaged in parliamentary debates against their white counterparts,
Across the tables in the Assembly Chamber at Ulundi!

Now it has happened again, the son of the Elephant,
The very same young Tiger,
Summoned a conventional gathering of his subjects,
In the vast valley called 'EMONA' in Nongoma,
Where he exhorted all the Zulus,
To unite and remain as solid as cement.

May you live long, Oh Reed of the soil,
Lion of the Zulus,
Relentlessly command your Chief Minister Buthelezi,
To lead your nation tirelessly,
Until it has been freed from the ravages of poverty,
From the scourge of disease,
And from the slavery of ignorance.
(Translated by Mr. Mbutho from the Zulu original)

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